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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of drama in a Spanish native language literacy course to engage adult students in the process of discussing their world. Nine 2-hour class sessions with 18 students were videotaped. During this period, using the theory of emancipatory education, the students developed a theater script based on an incident in a Central American country. In class, the students interviewed each other, discussed and debated news articles about the incident and related events, studied grammatical structures, contributed and discussed additional articles about oppression and the struggle for justice, and collectively wrote and read the script. The students became politically vocal and emotionally involved in the class discussions, and the class was reorganized in the process. It is concluded from ethnographic analysis of the experience that by using the students' language, educators make statements about the political dimension of literacy, legitimating their experiences and allowing them to generate their own knowledge. In addition, through the use of theater, the students are allowed to critically analyze their world by examining issues of race, language, and culture alongside social, economic, and historical factors. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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POPULAR THEATER AS A DISCOURSE FOR LIBERATION IN AN ADULT, NATIVE LANGUAGE, LITERACY CLASS

by

Klaudia Maria Rivera

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Date ________________________

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education in
Teachers College, Columbia University

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ABSTRACT

POPULAR THEATER AS A DISCOURSE FOR LIBERATION IN AN ADULT, NATIVE LANGUAGE, LITERACY CLASS

Klaudia Maria Rivera

This study is framed by the theories of native language instruction, critical/participatory literacy and popular theater. It illustrates how a group of Hispanic adult students reorganize their experience, providing the space for literacy to take place.

The analysis of the data uses an ethnographic approach in which each part of the data is a component of the whole and the whole is instrumental in explaining each part. The data consists of eighteen hours of videotape collected in the fall of 1988 in a native language literacy program. The program, located in one of the largest Spanish-speaking communities in New York City, utilizes a native language literacy approach and is influenced by the work of Paulo Freire.

This study shows that by using students' language, educators make a statement about the political dimension of literacy. The students' language carries their voices, and their voices speak of their reality. The use of the students' language legitimates their lived experiences and allows them to generate their own knowledge. Through the use of theater, the students are allowed to critically analyze the world, by taking into consideration issues of race, language, and culture along with social, economic, and historical factors.

The conclusions of this dissertation are:

(1) For critical educators to organize classes into spheres where students can speak "their language," they need to equalize the relationships of power within the classroom.

(2) By engaging in dialogue, teachers and students can analyze reality together. Students can then read the word in a critical way, name the conditions that affect their reality, and work towards their transformation.

(3) Educational materials must be rooted in the cultural universe of the people, and provide for a critical dimension of analysis. They should extend the possibilities for action, and deal with the issues that have historically impacted on the lives of the people.

(4) By allowing for the multiplicity of experiences and voices to evolve, teachers and students learn of the diverse ways people have resisted.

(5) Popular theater provides a context for people to dialogue, generate their own knowledge, and reach a new awareness of the world.

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KMR

THEATER AS A DISCOURSE FOR LIBERATION IN AN ADULT, NATIVE LANGUAGE, LITERACY CLASS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this introduction I describe the different factors that I believe led me to take upon myself the inquiry of the issues dealt with in this dissertation. I also describe the experiences that have shaped my thoughts and my beliefs about the world and education and which have influenced my practice as an educator. In addition, I briefly describe how I collected my data and the program that facilitated my study. I also introduce the adults with whom I worked. Finally, I list each of the chapters of this dissertation.

Since context provides us with the knowledge we need in order to understand life and new situations, it is important to know the context provided by teachers and students in a learning situation. The participants in the educational process bring into the classroom their past lives, their dreams and aspirations as they also bring their myths, their biases and internalized oppression. This, I believe, will affect the new context to be formed by the relationship among teachers and students which is framed by the role that society places on classrooms and schooling and that gives meaning to the role and purpose of education in society. Factors of race, gender, language and culture, along with social and economical factors, must be analyzed and reflected upon to aid our understanding and reorganization of the conditions that have kept economic and social inequalities in society. The ways in which oppressed groups have survived through their resistance have innumerable lessons for the educator concerned with equality and social justice. Students' ways of resisting the educational system must also be critically analyzed, as should the many ways in which oppressed groups manifest their oppression and the multiple ways they have developed to survive. We must analyze how, in the mists of these factors, students and teachers can create the space for a new type of pedagogy, a pedagogy that will not give answers but rather pose questions, a pedagogy that will challenge the conditions under which oppression is concealed, a pedagogy that will offer possibilities.

This dissertation shows how theater can be used in a literacy class to engage adults in the process of discussing their world in order to name it. Through this process, adult students engage in reading the world and reading the word in the process of writing about the world and re-writing reality. I believe that writing shows the world of the participants and the multiple voices of their discussions. I framed the study in the theory of critical literacy and popular theater. The analysis of the data utilizes an ethnographic approach in which each and every part is a component of the whole and in which the whole was instrumental in explaining each part. The purpose of this dissertation was not to prove but to show, from a practitioner's point of view, the implementation of a critical pedagogy in a literacy class through the use of popular theater. It attempted to show how a group of adult students reorganized themselves, through theater, to provide the space for "literacy" to take place.

Since I believe that we are not empty vessels and that we bring into the classroom the factors that have shaped our lives, I share in this introduction the aspects in my life that have shaped me as a critical educator.

I was born and raised in Nicaragua, a developing country in which, in 1978, more than 50% of the population was illiterate, a figure which was as high as 90% in some rural areas.[1] Following a process of radical change which occurred through a massive popular movement in 1979, the people, empowered by the shaping of their history, engaged in a literacy campaign. After only eight months, this campaign, developed and implemented with the people and for the people, decreased the illiteracy rate from 80% to 13%. But people were not taught to read in a vacuum. For the first time in Nicaragua, the people had the opportunity to shape the history of their country and to participate in the making of it. Writing the word and writing the world was intertwined. People were learning and re-writing their past history as they were writing and shaping their present history.[2] As a Nicaraguan, I was deeply moved and shaped by these changes. I experienced how a collective mass movement could give the people the experience of becoming. For me, 1978 was the dawn of freedom. I experienced what a collective shaping of history can do for that life-long process called education.

Living in the United States for several years, I have also been impacted by the status of literacy in this industrialized country. The statistics are mind boggling. The highest rates of illiteracy are among the poor, women, Blacks and Hispanics.[3,4] Since the group with whom I deal with in this dissertation is Hispanic, I will refer to the statistics about illiteracy rate among Hispanics in the United States. I wish to remind the reader that most Hispanic immigrants, as other immigrant groups have done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future, come to this country to fulfill a dream, in most cases pressed by the political, social, and economic conditions of their native lands. I also want to clarify that in this dissertation I do not deal with the issues of "literacy" and "illiteracy" as they are traditionally understood. I do not deal with the type of literacy measured by a reading test or the "ability" to read a text at a particular grade level. This dissertation deals with the type of literacy that, according to Gramsci, is both a concept and a social practice that must be linked historically to configurations of knowledge and power on the one hand, and the political and cultural struggle over language and experience on the other.[5] The type of literacy that allows people to participate in the understanding and transformation of their society. The statistics I am presenting are based on test scores that measure reading ability. I am including them because I think they are also an indicator of the oppressive conditions under which minorities live in the United States.

According to the National Council of La Raza in a publication called "Illiteracy in the Hispanic Community", published in July of 1986, 13.5% of Hispanics over 25 years of age have less than six years of schooling, compared with 2% of the general population.[6] Only 47.9% of the Hispanic population has completed 4 years of High School, compared to 75.5% of the non-Hispanic population.

According to the result of the English Language Proficiency Survey (ELPS), 48% of the non-English speaking adults were illiterate; 22% of the illiterate adults in the United States were Hispanics even though they totaled less than 6.4% of the adult U.S. population.[7] Although the precise extent of Spanish illiteracy among Hispanic adults is not known, the ELPS reported that, according to self reported data, 86% of adults from non-English speaking backgrounds who were illiterate in English were also illiterate in the native language.

These figures are increasing. Even though it is hard to know the percentage of Spanish dominant drop-outs, the percentage of High School drop-outs among Puerto Ricans in New York is as high as 80% in some districts.[8]

According to the 1980 Census, 64% of the non-English speaking population in the U.S. speaks Spanish at home, and

46% of those between the ages of 14 and 21 reported trouble speaking English.[9]

Because of my beliefs about justice in the world and my experiences as a practitioner concerned with the issues of race and social class, I have been impacted by the theories of Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Maxine Greene, Peter McLaren, Michael Apple and other critical theorists. In this study, I wanted to bring not only my life experiences into the classroom, but what I had practiced and learned during my career as an adult educator. I wanted to use a pedagogy that, through emancipatory knowledge, would provide the people the opportunity to become, to be active generators of their own knowledge and curriculum, to legitimate their lived experiences and knowledge, to critically discuss what they have been told and to reappropriate their own histories. An education in which people would create, in Arendt's terms, the public space where students speak their voices and, in their plurality, make sense of their lived lives. A public space where students discuss the world, in order to change it, through conscious decision making. A pedagogy that would empower the students to critically discuss about the knowledge they had been given in order to question who generated it, with what purposes and under whose interests. I wanted to experiment with students the power of collectivism and the power of the collective voice to reach the frontiers of the possible.

Because of my own experiences as a bilingual person who became bilingual as an adult, I knew that in order to practice emancipatory pedagogy the voices could best be organized in the peoples' native language, in this case in Spanish. A language that millions of people speak in the United States. A language that can be used either to validate us as a linguistic group or to oppress us. I knew the relationship between language, power and class. I also knew that the vision of a critical pedagogy could only be a reality by bringing into the classroom the cultural and linguistic universe of the people, because language and culture have framed the students' past and will frame their future.

Thirdly, I had experimented with theater for social change. I do not have a background in theater, but had used it in educational settings. I believe that theater is far enough from the people to allow them to see a reality in order to analyze it, while being close enough to the people to allow them to pour their experiences into such reality. I believe that theater can provide the space to discuss and to feel the world in order to name it. I wanted us to experiment with change, to research what is said and believed, to find out who said it and who has invested interests in us believing it. I wanted to rehearse with change through collective writing and theater. I wanted us to change from spectators and objects of history to actors and authors of history.

Finally, I needed to find a program concerned with liberatory pedagogy, where students were taught in their native language, that would allow me to implement my ideas about education and theater. I found this program in a Hispanic community in New York City.

The present study consists of a total of five chapters. In the remaining part of this first chapter, I describe the program and the students where I collected my data, how the data was collected, analyzed and integrated. I also describe in very general terms some of the limitations of the study. In the second chapter, I provide the reader with a theoretical framework. I describe some of the concepts in critical pedagogy and the theory outlined by the theorists I named above. I also describe the concepts of emancipatory and native language literacy. Finally, I describe the concepts of popular theater, and how theater can be a tool in naming the world to open new possibilities.

In the third chapter, I share how the students and I engaged in praxis, how we made sense of the concepts of critical theory, emancipatory literacy and popular theater. I share the experiences of our lived togetherness. I show our "naming" of oppression and the oppressor, how we engaged in the re-writing of the history of El Salvador and how we collectively appropriated the authorship of what could be. I also provide the reader with a sketch of what happened in every class to give a context of not only how each and every class explains the whole, but also how the whole gives the context for the understanding of what happened in every class.

In the fourth chapter I integrate the data, through the use of vignettes, with the theoretical framework of the study. I attempt to illustrate the power of our discourse. In this fourth chapter I refer back to the second and third chapters, and through ethnographic analysis, attempt to bring the reader inside the nine sessions that constituted the unit of the study and that can only be explained in terms of the culture that was created through our relationships to each other.

Finally, in the sixth chapter I present the conclusions of the study. The final chapter is followed by the appendixes and bibliography.

The Program

The program where I collected my data is located in one of the largest Spanish-speaking communities in New York City. It is a native language literacy program where classes meet three times a week during the day, two-hours per class. The program offers three different level of literacy. The students in two of the literacy classes also attend English as a Second Language classes and all classes have access to computer instruction. The program is free of charge and funded both through public and private funds. The staff of the program is of the same and/or very similar linguistic and cultural background as the students and it is concerned about student participation in the program. This student participation takes place at different levels. First, four students participate in an incorporated Board of Directors, with the remaining members of the Board being individuals from the same linguistic/cultural community as the students. One of the goals of the program is for the Board to consist entirely of students and community members.

Students are also part of a "Steering Committee" which meets on a weekly basis and is composed of the staff members and two student representatives from each literacy class. There are a total of six student representatives and six staff-members. This committee makes the every-day program decisions and serves as the liaison between the staff and the students. Educational and curriculum ideas are brought to this committee for discussion.

The program staff is composed of a coordinator, a counselor, two literacy/ESL teachers, a computer instructor and a researcher. The researcher, together with the coordinator, documents the daily happenings in the program and what occurs in each literacy class at least once a week.

The educational philosophy of the program has been influenced by Paulo Freire, and thus, dialogue is an important part of every class. Students' experiences are important elements of the curriculum and there are activities that link the classes to the outside physical community.

Data Collection and Interpretation

The data were collected in the Fall of 1988. I collected the data during the first nine class-meetings of the academic year. The data consist of approximately eighteen hours of videotape that were later transcribed and analyzed. Besides the nine classes, I also documented a general assembly that took place the third day of classes, where students and staff met to share ideas about the program, to ask for information and to introduce one another. I also took notes, but did not videotape, a meeting I had with the teacher of the class where I presented to him my research ideas, previous experiences with theater and previous affiliation to this particular program in order to encourage him to allow me to conduct the study in his class. I also took notes of a meeting of the Steering Committee in which I presented to the group the curriculum ideas I had in mind. During the data collection, the teacher and I taught the class. The coordinator and/or researcher of the program were present and took notes during three of the nine classes. The students knew the purpose of the camera and the purpose of my brief stay in the program. The teacher and I made joint decisions about the curriculum, readings, the use of time and the activities. The regular teacher of the class was present at all sessions. He had been in the program for around one and a half years and, besides this particular class, also taught English as a Second Language.

The end of the data collection was marked by the end in the development of a theater script. The nine classes were transcribed, vignettes were chosen and patterns were identified.

The Students

There were eighteen students who participated in the class. There were thirteen women and five men. Sixteen of the students live in the same community were the program is located and two came from other communities in New York City. Since the data was collected at the beginning of the academic year, half of the students were returning students while the other half were new students. Some of the students, while not new to the program, were new to this particular group since they had been promoted from another class. Most of the students had been in New York City for a long time while a few were recent arrivals. The names of the students and the teacher have been changed in the present study.

Limitations of the Study

There were issues of power in the class, not only between the teachers and the students, but between the teachers. These issues were reflected in the decision making process and the choosing of materials. The fact that time was limited precipitated some of the activities while defining others. The data were very extensive: there were approximately nineteen adults in every videotape, sometimes several of them talking at the same time, which presented difficulties in the transcription and analysis of the data. The interactions in such a large group were of such magnitude that it was hard to focus on only a few. There was a limited amount of time available for each class, therefore some of the issues which were discussed were not fully developed or analyzed.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

[1] Valerie Miller, Between Struggle and Hope. The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1985). p. 20.

[2] Fernando Cardenal, S.J. and Valerie Miller, "Nicaragua 1980. The Battle of the ABCs," Harvard Educational Review, February, 1981. pp. 1-30.

[3] Carman Hunter and David Harman, Adult Illiteracy in the United States, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1985), pp. 36-53.

[4] Jonathan Kozol, Illiterate America, (New York: Anchor Press, 1985), p. 4.

[5] Quoted in Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, Literacy: Reading the Word and the World, (South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1987), pp. 1-2.

[6] Arturo Vargas, Illiteracy in the Hispanic Community, (Washington, D.C.: National Council of La Raza, 1986), p.7.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Peter McLaren, Life in Schools, (New York: Longman, 1989), p. 17.

[9] William B. Bliss, "Providing Adult Basic Education Services to Adults with Limited English Proficiency", (Background Paper Prepared for Project Adult Literacy of the Southport Institute for Policy Analysis, Southport, Conn., 1989), p.8.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I look at the theory of emancipatory education that has influenced my work. I also describe the concepts of critical literacy and native language instruction that are at the core of my practice. Finally, I review the theory behind popular theater which I integrated in the unit of the study.

The data in this study were analyzed based on reasoning which derives from the concept of the universe as an interrelated organism. This analogical mode of reasoning is completely opposed to the casual paradigm which permeates modern Western social science and is inherently atomistic and reductionist, defining identity in terms of the thing itself and not in relation to the context of which the thing is part. We are able to understand fully what occurs during the classes if we consciously apply animistic analogies. That is, events observed in each class can be understood as partial expressions of a self-organizing totality.[1] The story as described in Chapter III can be explained holistically, because each class is bound together with the whole through its relationship with other classes. Thus, we see patterns and associations between events that occur throughout the nine classes observed in this study. As Taussig has stated, the specific meaning of each event is dependent upon the total set of relationships.[2] We need to look for meaning in the relationships and patterns observed in the data and not in each isolated event. In other words, each observed moment contains part of the whole within itself, and the identity of each moment springs from its relationship to the whole.

Liberatory Pedagogy

John Dewey is often referred to as the father of progressive education.[3] His commitment to the norms of mutuality and reciprocity and his call for a renewal of democracy and a reconstitution of community makes a significant contribution to the critical education of today. Dewey's concern was to encourage free and informed choosing within a social context where ideas could be developed during public discussion and communication.[4]

In the first half of the twentieth century, Antonio Gramsci, an Italian social theorist, viewed literacy as both a concept and a social practice that must be linked historically to configurations of knowledge and power on the one hand, and the political and cultural struggle over language and experience on the other.[5] According to Gramsci, the notion of literacy needed to be grounded in an ethical and political project that dignified and extended the possibilities for human life and freedom. In other words, literacy as a radical construct had to be rooted in a spirit of critique and project of possibilities that enabled people to participate in the understanding and transformation of their society.[6]

The dialectical nature of critical theory allows the educational researcher to see the school not only as an arena of indoctrination or a site of instruction, but also as a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self-transformation.[7] Critical educators argue that schooling must be tied to a struggle for a qualitatively better life for all through the construction of a society based on non-exploitative relations and social justice. The purpose of liberatory education is to provide students with a model that permits them to examine the underlying political, social, and economic foundations of the larger society.[8,9,10] This liberatory or emancipatory education, also called a radical theory of education, has emerged in the last fifteen years. It has been broadly defined as "the new sociology of education" or a "critical theory of education." Critical pedagogy is basically concerned with the issues of politics and power and their impact on how schools work. The theory of critical pedagogy had its beginning at the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, before World War II, in Germany's Institute for Social Research. The first group of theorists included figures such as Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse.[11] Currently in the United States, the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory is currently influencing pedagogy through the work of Jurgen Habermas, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Paulo Freire, Stanley

Aronowitz, Maxine Greene, Michael Apple, Philip Corrigan and Michelle Fine.

Liberatory pedagogy is based on the conviction that schooling for self and social empowerment occurs ethically prior to a mastery of technical skills, which are tied to the marketplace.[12] Critical educators stress that any genuine pedagogical practice demands a commitment to social transformation in solidarity with subordinated and marginalized groups. The critical perspective allows educators to look at schooling in terms of race, class, power, and gender. Therefore, critical educators are dedicated to self empowerment and social transformation.[13]

The work of Michael Apple conceptualizes the relationships between schools, culture and the economy.[14,15] He argues that schools are both productive and reproductive apparatuses of the state. According to Apple, successful educational reform must include a number of dynamics: outside struggles over modes of production; reforms in the workplace; the democratization of decision-making procedures and social practices in the schools; and the efforts of classroom teachers to make multiclass coalitions with progressive social movements in the wider society.[16,17]

Jurgen Habermas, the German social theorist, posited three forms of knowledge which distinguish liberatory pedagogy from other types of education. Educators who practice liberal and conservative educational ideologies emphasize technical knowledge, defined as knowledge which can be measured and quantified.[18] Giroux refers to this as productive knowledge.[19] Technical or productive knowledge is based on the natural sciences, uses empirical analytical methods, and is evaluated through the collection of scores on intelligence and reading tests.

Practical knowledge, a second type of knowledge according to Habermas, intends to enlighten individuals so they can shape their daily actions in the world.[20] This type of knowledge is generally acquired by describing and analyzing social situations historically in order to enable students to understand social events.

The third type of knowledge is what Habermas calls emancipatory knowledge and Giroux refers to as directive knowledge.[21] It helps us understand how social relationships are distorted and manipulated by relations of power and privilege. Furthermore, it aims at creating a classroom environment in which domination and oppression can be overcome and transformed through collective action, thus creating the foundations for social justice, equality, and empowerment.

As Giroux has pointed out, knowledge must be made meaningful to students before it can be made critical.[22] If we ignore the ideological dimensions of students' experiences, we deny the ground upon which students learn, speak, and imagine.[23] McLaren has proposed a critical pedagogy that takes the problems and needs of the students themselves as its starting point.[24] He states that any emancipatory curriculum must emphasize students experiences, which are intimately related to identity formation.[25] According to McLaren and Giroux, liberatory pedagogy has to be constructed around the stories that people tell and the possibilities that underlie the experiences that shape their voices.[26] They define critical pedagogy within the parameters of a political project centering around the primacy of student experience, the concept of voice, and the importance of transforming schools and communities into democratic public spheres.[27]

Graves argues that students experience is a central aspect of teaching and learning and has to be dealt with in its particular context and specificity.[28] As a language of possibility, Graves' and Giroux's approach to literacy provides a crucial insight into the learning process by linking the nature of learning itself with dreams, experiences, histories, and language that students bring to the schools.[29]

Giroux, in his concept of "voice," refers to the interlocking set of meanings through which students and teachers actively engage in dialogue with one another.[30] Individual voices must be understood within their cultural and historical specificity. How students and teachers define themselves and name experiences help educators understand how classroom meaning is produced and legitimated.[31] We must look at a student's voice as a force that both mediates and shapes reality within historically constructed practices and power relationships.[32] A pedagogy which is liberatory situates itself in the intersection of the students' language, culture, experiences and history.[33]

Philip Corrigan developed a three-pronged approach to liberatory pedagogy.[34] Students should be encouraged to develop a pedagogical negativism, that is, to doubt everything, and to try to identify those forms of power and control that operate in their own social lives. Teachers should assist students in making a judgment about these forms of power and control. Furthermore, they should help students affirm their judgments by returning to history to help find a language which registers or names the dominant forms of power and control that deny the knowledge of subjugated groups.[35,36]

To achieve these steps, McLaren suggests a special kind of classroom approach that Michelle Fine calls "naming."[37] Naming, according to Fine, is identifying and defining those social and economic relationships that most clearly affect students' lives, i.e., the inequitable distribution of power and resources. This act of "naming" or identifying and defining the oppressive social and cultural facts of life is considered dangerous conversations in most schools. However, "not naming" is simply a means of silencing students' voices. "To not name is to systematically alienate, cut off from home, from heritage and from lived experience and ultimately severs these students from their educational process."[38]

According to Aronowitz, liberatory pedagogy stresses forms of learning and knowledge aimed at providing a critical understanding of how social reality works, it should emphasize how certain dimensions of such a reality are sustained, the nature of its formative processes, and on how those aspects of it that are related to the logic of domination can be changed.[39] Stuart Hall defines critical pedagogy in terms of the kind of skills it should involve. He writes:

> It is the skills which are basic, now, to a class which means to lead, not simply to serve, the modern world. They are the basic, general skills of analysis and conceptualization, of concepts and ideas and principles rather than of specific and outdated 'contents', of abstraction and generalization and categorization, at whatever level it is possible to teach them.[40]

Aronowitz states that a liberatory pedagogy curriculum develops around knowledge forms that challenge and critically appropriate dominant ideologies, rather than simply rejecting them outright; it should also take the historical and social particularities of students' experiences as a starting point for developing pedagogical practices. According to Gordon, emancipatory pedagogy refers to a process of teaching that aims to free teachers and students from the mental restrictions impose by the mainstream culture on the way they perceive things.[41]

Freire's work is currently used by educators throughout the world and has made a significant contribution to the theory and practice of liberatory pedagogy.[42] Freire views learning as a political process, which he frequently refers to as "conscientization", a process that invites learners to engage in dialogue in order to reflect upon their oppressive conditions and act upon them. The ultimate goal of the educational process is for learners to "exercise the right to participate consciously in the sociohistorical transformation of their society.[43] Teachers and students take part in a "praxis," or reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.[44] To Freire, dialogue, reflection and action are important elements in the struggle for liberation. Freire's work is based on the assumption that human beings' ontological vocation is to be subjects who act upon and transforms their world, and in so doing move towards even new possibilities of fuller and richer life, individually and collectively. For Freire, every human being is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others. In this dialogue, the word takes on new power. "I" is no longer an abstraction or myth, but a means by which the human being discovers her/himself and her/his potential as she/he wins back her/his right to say her/his own word. Freire believes that there is no such thing as a neutral or apolitical educational process. As Florence Tager has stated:

> Freire's pedagogy insists on a deep connection between the culture of everyday life and radical politics. For Freire, critical consciousness and the dissection of themes from daily life is an ongoing process that grows out of praxis and leads to further practice [Freire's term for action with reflection]. Ultimately, education for critical consciousness leads to revolutionary politics. For Freire, radical pedagogy integrates culture and politics.[45]

Freire emphasizes pedagogical practices that are designed for liberation by providing individuals with collective possibilities for reflection and action.[46] Through dialogical communication, educators engage in dialogue with, and draw upon the cultural capital of the oppressed, in order to empower themselves with the oppressed to "read" the word in both immediate and wider contexts.[47] Maxine Greene has also talked about the importance of dialogue in her views of education for freedom.[48] She states that through dialogue, language opens possibilities of seeing, hearing, and understanding. "Each person reaches out from his/her own ground toward what might be, should be, is not yet."[49]

According to Freire, those truly committed to liberatory pedagogy must reject the banking concept of education in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of human beings as conscious beings. He advocates for "problem posing" education, which rejects communiques and embodies communication.[50] In this type of education "the teacher is not merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn by being taught also teach.[51] In problem-posing education, students develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world; they learn to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.[52] We find that in banking education reality is mystified, while in problem-posing education reality is demystified. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance while problem-posing education affirms students as beings in the process of becoming. It views students as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality.[53] This unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitates that education be an ongoing activity. Dewey also believed that the self was not ready-made or pre-existent. He believed the self was "something in continuous formation through choice of action."[54] Greene believes that these concepts held relevance for a concept of education which is conceived as a process of futuring, of releasing persons to become different, of provoking persons to repair lacks and to take action to create themselves.[55]

According to Freire, human existence cannot be silent. To exist is to "name" and change the world. "Men [and women] are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection."[56] He defines dialogue as the encounter between men [and women], mediated by the word, in order to name the world. By naming the world, students transform it. True dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking - "thinking which discuss an indivisible solidarity between the world, between men and women, and admits of no dichotomy between them- thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity."[57]

In liberatory pedagogy the teacher is viewed as a transformative intellectual. According to Giroux and McLaren, the term "transformative intellectual" refers to one who exercises forms of intellectual and pedagogical practice which attempt to insert teaching and learning directly into the political sphere by arguing that schooling represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations.[58] They are also referring to one whose intellectual practices are necessarily grounded in forms of moral and ethical discourse which exhibit a concern for the suffering and struggle of the disadvantaged and oppressed. Teachers who view themselves as transformative intellectuals treat students as critical agents, question how knowledge is produced, utilize dialogue and make knowledge meaningful, critical, and emancipatory.[59] The transformative teacher will link teaching and learning with the political goal of educating students to take risks, to alter the oppressive conditions in which they live.[60]

Greene has written about the dialectics of freedom in liberatory pedagogy. She expresses a view of education for freedom that takes into account our political and social realities as well as the human condition itself.[61] She has stated:

> "it is through and by the means of education that students may become empowered to think about what they are doing, to become mindful, to share meaning, to conceptualize, and make varied sense of their lived worlds."[62]

Native Language Critical Literacy

According to Gramsci, the notion of literacy needs to be grounded in an ethical and political project that dignifies and extends the possibilities for human life and freedom.[63] Literacy has to be rooted in a spirit of critique and project of possibility that enables people to participate in the understanding and transformation of society. Paulo Freire has provided a model of critical or emancipatory literacy in which literacy is viewed as part of the process of becoming self-critical about the historically constructed nature of one's experience. For Freire, language plays an active role in constructing experience and in organizing and legitimizing the social practice available to various groups in society. In Gramsci's terms, language is both hegemonic and counterhegemonic, instrumental in both silencing the voices of the oppressed and in legitimizing oppressive social relations.[64] But at the same time, language is the terrain upon which aspirations, dreams, and hopes are given meaning through a merging of the discourse of critique and possibility.[65]

According to Giroux and McLaren critical literacy is a precondition for self and social empowerment.[65] To be literate is to be present and active in the struggle for reclaiming one's voice, history, and future. Giroux states that a theory of critical literacy needs to develop pedagogical practices in which the battle to make sense of one's life reaffirms and furthers the need for teachers and students to recover their own voices so they can retell their own histories and in so doing check and criticize the history they are told against the one they have lived.[67,68]

According to Giroux, for critical literacy to take place, teachers should provide students with the opportunity to question different ideological discourses as they are presented in curriculum materials.[69] In this process, students should be encouraged to engage in the theoretical and practical task of questioning their own theoretical and political positions.[70]

In critical literacy the concept of voice is extremely important since it represents the unique instances of self-expression through which students affirm their own class, cultural, racial and gender identities.[71] Proponents of critical literacy believe that students' voices are necessarily shaped by personal history since it refers to the discourse they have available to make themselves understood and listened to, and to define themselves as active participants in the world.[72] When we speak of students' voices, we speak of the students' language, and language carries history. Language carries the conception of the world of the group that speaks it. Language does not merely reflect reality, but plays an active role in the construction of reality.[73]

Learning language is an active, collective and human process, one that forces the learner to interact and establish social realations with people in the immediate environment.[74] According to Walsh, these social relations and interactions color language and give words their flavor and form.[75]

Critical literacy programs that support the use of the students' native language and culture in the classroom believe that by denying the language of the students, we deny their reality, we silence their voices. By denying the students their own language in the educational process, programs give the message of not accepting the language as good enough as to be used in education.[76]

In response to the problem of the non-literate second language learner, in recent years, the bilingual approach to literacy has been developed.[77] This approach uses a combination of native language literacy and English as a Second Language.[78,79] The linguistic foundation of the bilingual approach is derived from the "Common Underlying Proficiency," a theory proposed by Cummins which states that native language instruction that develops native language reading skills is also developing a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is strongly related to the development of English literacy and general academic skills.[80] According to Cummins, this "Common Underlying Proficiency" allows the student to transfer cognitive/academic or literacy-related skills across languages.[81] Consequently, the reading and writing abilities developed in the native language will be transferred to English, provided there is sufficient instruction of English as a Second Language in the instructional program.[82,83] This is contrary to the common assumption that students learning in their own language will be unable to develop speaking, reading, and writing skills in the second language due to the lack of sufficient time to practice it.[84,85]

Programs that implement the bilingual approach have as one of their objectives the addition of a second language and a second cultural affiliation to the students' repertoire.[86] Cultural differences among students should be viewed as strengths in their pluralities rather than deficiencies. If not, teaching becomes an assault on the specific histories, experiences and knowledges that students use both to define their own identities and to make sense of their world.[87] In this assault, teachers lose an understanding of the relationships between language, culture and power as well as a sense of how to develop pedagogical possibilities for their students from the cultural differences that they bring to the school and the classroom.[88] This occurs when a teacher draws his or her values narrowly in order to challenge and disprove the experiences and beliefs of students from subordinate groups. The concept of hegemony offers further insights which validate even more the use of the students' native language in educational programs.[89] Hegemony is the process through which a dominant culture is able to exercise domination over subordinate classes or groups.[90] Hegemony refers to the maintenance of domination achieved not through coercion, but through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as church, the state, the schools, the mass media, the political system and the family.[91]

Gramsci explained hegemony as meaning direction by moral and intellectual persuasion, not by physical coercion. The persuasion is typically very quiet and seductive, so disguised that it renders students acquiescent to power without their realizing it.[92] Greene believes the persuasion becomes most effective when the method used obscures what is happening in the learner's mind.[93] The acquiescence, the acceptance, may find expression through students dropping out of the educational program. This may be because the message given emphasizes a stratification system which offers a limited range of possibilities.[94] Lacking an awareness of realizable possibilities, the students withdraw from the program because they have no hope of achieving freedom.[95]

In a monolingual, monocultural literacy class imposed on non-English speakers, hegemony is secured when the teacher supplies the symbols, representations and practices of school life in such a way that the basis of social authority and the unequal relations of power and privilege remain hidden. In this instance, the school ensures that the students who fail will view such failure in terms of personal inadequacy, i.e., because they do not know English, the language of the State.

The concept of voice alerts teachers to the fact that all discourse is situated historically and mediated culturally.[96] The term "voice" can only be understood if situated in a universe of shared meanings, that is, in the symbols, narratives, and social practices of the community or culture in which the dialogue is taking place.[97] In critical literacy programs, "voice" refers to the cultural grammar and background knowledge that individuals use to interpret and articulate experience.[98] Each individual voice is shaped by its owner's particular cultural history and prior experiences.[99]

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, is one of the most important exponents of critical or liberatory education. His theory of liberatory pedagogy was born out of the context of Brazil, where the conditions of oppression are very different to the ones in the United States. For Freire, any pedagogy has to be born from the context in which it is implemented. Therefore, the educator has to constantly reinvent her/his practice, taking into its construct the critical understanding of the historical, political, social, cultural, and economic factors of the practice to be reinvented.[100,101]

For Freire, humanization is the vocation of human beings.[102] Because liberation is humanizing, the oppressed, in their search for their humanization also search for their liberation. But the task of the oppressed, in order to regain their humanization, does not end with their own liberation but also with the liberation, and therefore, humanization of those that kept them oppressed.[103] Another vocation of human beings is the understanding that reality is not static and that human beings cannot only transform reality and history but also make them. The same way that humanization is the vocation of human beings, the transformation of the reality that has kept them oppressed is a historical task for human beings. In order to transform the world, human beings have to engage in reflection and action upon it.[104]

According to Freire, for a pedagogy to be truly liberatory it cannot be distant from the reality of the oppressed. The liberatory teacher needs to use the students' cultural universe as a point of departure in the educational process.[105,106] Therefore, the teacher-student contradiction has to be resolved. The critical educator can do that by practicing what Freire has named problem-posing education. Problem-posing education entails a constant unveiling of reality, and, through dialogue, students and teachers engage in critical thinking in order to name the world and transform the world. In problem-posing education, "the teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is him/herself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach."[107]

In problem-posing education, students develop the power to perceive the world critically, not as a static reality, but as a reality in process of transformation.[108] In this process, students have to first name the world; the naming of the world is an ongoing process in which once the world has been named by the students, it reappears as a problem that has to be named again. This naming of the world is one of the most important tenets in Freirian education. According to Freire "men [and women] are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection."[109] Freire states that "dialogue is the encounter between men [and women], mediated by the world, in order to name the world."[110]

Dialogue among teachers and students is a very important condition for the naming of the world. Furthermore, for true dialogue to take place participants must engage in critical thinking, which will allow the participants to perceive reality not as a finished product but something in process, in the cycle of transformation.[111] Dialogue will also allow the participants to demystify reality. The oppressor uses myths in order to keep the oppressed passive, and it is through critical dialogue that the oppressed has the power to overcome these myths. These myths indicate that the language and/or culture of the oppressed are not good enough.

In Freire's pedagogy the word and the world are intrinsically intertwined. It is the word that mediates the world and that makes it understandable, and it is through the word (dialogue) that human beings are able to critically think about the world, name it, reflect upon it in order to transform it. Therefore, in the educational process teachers and students must engage in the reading of the world, the cultural universe of the people, in order to act upon it and thereby change the oppressive conditions under which life is lived.[112]

Freire has always insisted that the words used in organizing a literacy program come from what he calls the "word universe" of the people who are participating, expressing the actual language, their anxieties, fears, demands, and dreams.[113] He believes that literacy's oral dimension is extremely important and that before students attempt to learn how to read and write they need to read and write the world. In their struggle for liberation, minority students should be involved in a literacy process in which they learn to read and write their history.[114]

Freire believes that language is the mediating force of knowledge; but it is also knowledge itself.[115] He talks about the students' right to multiple voices. He states that any literacy project for students who do not speak the dominant language of the school would have to allow them to go through the reading of the word in their native languages. A literacy program that negates the plurality of voice and discourse is authoritarian, antidemocratic.[116,117] In order for students to reappropriate their culture and history, literacy programs cannot be offered in a language that negates their reality and attempts to eradicate their own means of communication. According to Macedo, to use the dominant language as the only medium of instruction is to continue to provide manipulative strategies that support the maintenance of cultural domination.[118] This monolingual practice will eventually convince the students that their language is a corrupt and inferior system unworthy of true educational status.[119] In addition to using the students' language as a medium of instruction, their cultural universe should be used as a point of departure enabling students to recognize themselves as possessing a specific and important cultural identity. Macedo further states that the successful usage of the students' cultural universe requires respect and legitimation of students' discourses, that is, their own linguistic codes. In the United States, subordinate students will have difficulty achieving the critical mastery of English without the development of their own voice, which is contained within the social dialect that shapes their reality. Literacy can only be liberatory and critical to the extent that it is conducted in the language of the students.[120] It is through native language literacy that students "name their world" and begin to establish a dialectical relationship with the dominant class in the process of transforming the social and political structures that have kept them oppressed and that silence their voices. In other words, students are literate to the extent that they are able to use language for social and political transformation. According to Bennett and Pedraza, language must be understood as a reflection of the social history and conditions of the community.[121] Thus, literacy programs conducted in the dominant language are alienating to subordinate students who do not speak that language, since they deny students the fundamental tools for reflection, critical thinking, and social interaction.[122]

A critical literacy program will both stimulate the oral expressions of the learners and will challenge students to begin to write.[123] Oral expression should be stimulated in the students' native or dominant language and can be achieved through debates, in the telling of stories and through discussion in which the facts are analyzed. Reading and writing are inseparable phases of the same process, representing the understanding and domination of the language and of language.[124]

Popular Theater as an Emancipatory Tool

The critical educators mentioned in this chapter believe that education can either empower or disempower groups by making them either passive individuals who submit to the oppressive conditions under which they live or active citizens with the power to change society. Radical theories of theater also believe that theater can be used to make the spectators either passive recipients of the message of the performance or active protagonists with a critical consciousness and a capacity for action.

According to Aristotle, "theater is change and not simple presentation of what exists: it is becoming and not being." Brecht argues, in what is called "Marxist Poetics," that theater should be grounded in history, based on the structures of the economic, social and political contradictions.[125] A theater that transforms spectators into observers, arousing their critical consciousness and capacity for action. The knowledge acquired through the performance reveals the faults of society and provides a vision of the world.[126] For Brecht, this type of theater clarifies concepts, reveals truths, exposes contradictions, and proposes transformations. It is the beginning of action.

During 1968, many discussions took place in theater circles about the political function of art in general and of drama in particular.[127] Even though it is impossible to trace exactly when and where theatrical artists read and talked about the revolutionary potential of drama, the influence of Gramsci and Marcuse on popular theater is quite evident.[128] During the occupation of the Odeon theater in Paris, these names where often mentioned. From May 15, 1968, striking actors and students debated about the possibilities of revolutionary theater. It became evident to young actors that they too were underpaid workers with very little creative input in their roles. With this new consciousness, striking actors went to perform plays in occupied factories, and through comical sketches and the political montages they performed, they developed "a new position with regard to the theater and its capacity to intervene in class struggle."[129]

Thus, in 1968, radical theater groups in France, England, Italy, West Germany, and elsewhere in Europe and the United States came to see their main task as proposing an alternative to the dominant one, which, in their eyes, was nothing but a framework for bourgeois ideological manipulation. For these actors, directors, and theater technicians to stay within the existing commercial theater structures would be "selling out" to the authorities; therefore, they stepped out and created a new, marginal theater circuit.[130] Many of them set up theater collectives in working class neighborhoods in order to create an uncompromising theater of protest and consciousness-raising for the working class at large.

Antonio Gramsci is often mentioned as one of the chief inspirators of popular theater. Throughout his life, Gramsci remained interested in developing what he called a counterhegemonistic thrust that should be opposed to the bourgeois hegemony.[131] As a linguist, Gramsci spoke about the importance of language and literature in the creation of a counterhemonistic culture. He realized that, in the hands of the ruling class, language and literature reinforced social and moral codes of the dominant culture. Knowing this, throughout history the dominant classes have suppressed popular forms of cultural expression or reappropriated them for their own purposes.[132]

Since 1968, most of the popular theater groups throughout the world have been involved in what Paulo Freire termed "cultural action".[133] Cultural action helps the oppressed to expel the myths that they are inferior human beings. As Gramsci, Freire argues that this interiorization of the dominator's cultural models can only be countered by the creation of a new culture. Freire distinguishes between cultural action for freedom, which is characterized by dialogue and its purpose is to conscientisize the people and cultural action for domination, which serves to domisticate the people.[134]

The popular theater movement that has developed since the late sixties has associated itself with the contemporary radical/intellectual climate. According to John McGrath, a radical British playwright, popular theater is primarily concerned with "the social, political and cultural development of the working class towards maturity and hegemony."[135,136]

Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theater theorist and actor, proposed what he calls the "poetics of the oppressed," in which "the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonistic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change - in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps the theater is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution."[137]

For Boal and Freire, human beings have to be humanized. They must restore their capacity for action, they must become subjects who understand that the world is not finished. As the spectator regains his capacity to think and to act for himself he becomes liberated. Boal believes that all truly revolutionary groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilize them. "The theater is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it."[138]

As in Freire's problem-posing education, Boal proposes for the actors to present problems to the audience which in turn will offer solutions. Once the solutions have been improvised, the audience again offers changes, and in this way, it is involved in the writing of the unfinished script. Through this technique, Boal offers to end the division between actors and spectators. Discussion and analysis are important elements of this type of theater, as is the showing of reality in transition.

Kidd has outlined the following elements of popular theater:[139,140]

> 1) The objectives are to increase the consciousness and assertiveness of the oppressed; to challenge inequality, oppression, exploitation; to overcome not only the physical domination faced by the oppressed but also the ideological conditioning.
>
> 2) Popular theater is an educational process rather than a finalized product: the performance is not the total experience; the performance aspect is linked with and reinforced by discussion and other forms of interaction.
>
> 3) The process is aimed at increased participation or activism by the oppressed in asserting control over their lives.

4) Popular theater is a medium for popular expression, a people's tool to voice their concern and articulate their feelings, perspective, and analysis of the world.

5) A people's curriculum, - which reflects popular issues, rather than the externally imposed text books of conventional education or the externally prescribed messages of traditional development work.

6) A collective activity; which stimulates interaction, the sharing of views, collaborative analysis, collective decision-making, and collective action.

7) A process which facilitates critical consciousness - it draws out people's latent dissatisfaction and sense of justice, challenging the everyday understandings and ruling-class myths, and deepening understanding of the political-economic structures which shape the possibilities.

After looking back at twenty years of radical popular theater in the West, Ven Erven found the general features that characterizes it. The following are the features that relate to this dissertation:[141]

1. It aggressively recruits a non-theater audience that consists of workers, peasants, white collar employees, students, housewives, unemployed youth, and children. Popular theater reaches out to the non-theater audience by means of free admissions to the shows, which it often performs in the target audience's working and living environment.

2. It usually creates its plays more or less collectively.

3. The creation of the play is preceded or accompanied by an extensive period of research into its subject matter. The themes of radical popular plays are usually related to specific problems that affect the target audience. This research period often involves elaborate interviews with members of the target audience and try-outs of preliminary scenes of the upcoming play.

> 4. Even the full length final draft of the radical popular play is rarely definitive. The performances of popular theater are followed by animated dialogues between cast members and spectators, and pertinent comments and criticisms are incorporated in an unfixed script that is continuously updated.

This dissertation experimented with the popular theater techniques offered by Boal in what he calls "Newspaper Theater."[142] According to Boal, the main objective of the newspaper theater is to return the theater to the people. Its second objective is to demystify the "objectivity" of journalism.[143,144] One of the ways in which Boal has used this type of theater is to teach to "read" correctly. By this he means to help the participants to read the reality of the news. Newspaper theater got its name from the Nucleus Group of the Arena Theater of Sao Paulo, the first to research the technique utilizing the newspaper.[145]

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

THE STORY

In this chapter, I describe what happened in each one of the nine classes of the study. The chapter is divided into the nine classes and sub-divided into the main happenings in each of them. This story is based on the transcripts of the ten videotapes taken during the data collection process. The story relates how the class was reorganized, through theater, during the nine classes. This reorganization allowed for dialogue to take place, for oppression to be named, and for reading to be identified as analysis. During the fifth through the ninth classes, the students developed a theater script that reflects their re-writing of the events in which ten peasants were killed in El Salvador. I believe the theater re-organized the students to name themselves as writers and authors. I also believe that it allowed them to read the word and the world: that it allowed them to see reality as something that is collectively created. I believe the theater allowed the students to read the word and world and to re-write the word through the shaping of the world.

In Chapter II, I outlined the theories of critical education, of native language literacy and of popular theater that inspired me to design the curriculum for these nine classes. In this chapter, I present the story as it develops during the nine classes and in Chapter IV, I integrate, through the use of vignettes, the theoretical concepts with the story. There are elements in this chapter that are not addressed in Chapter IV because of the limitations of the study. The present chapter is based on approximately nineteen hours of videotape.

Background Information on Data Collection

I collected my data in an adult literacy program in which students are taught to read in their native language. Students are also offered English as a Second Language classes. The staff, teachers, and students in the program are of the same or very similar linguistic and cultural background.

This is a community-based educational program. It is located in a community center, and the services are provided to people from the community. It has a Board of Directors, and it is incorporated as a non-profit organization. Most of the students live in the same community where the program is located, but some travel from other neighborhoods. Student participation is encouraged at different levels. Two students from each class are active members of the Steering Committee, the body which makes everyday program decisions. Four students are members of the Board of Directors. The program is free to the students and the classes meet during the day.

The arrangement of the classrooms indicate that this is not a traditional school. Students do not sit in rows; there are no big blackboards on the walls; and the teachers do not sit behind a desk. Rather, students sit around big tables facing each other, and the rooms have multiple uses. One of the rooms has a sink and the other has several big chairs, a pool table, and a coffee machine where students can get coffee for a small contribution, or for free if they cannot afford a donation. I found out that coffee may be an important ritual in the program. During meetings, gatherings, and celebrations, there is coffee available. In the classroom where I collected my data, the classes began and ended with coffee. People talked about and around it, talked about the business of it, and collected money for it.

Deciding the Curriculum to be Used

I had visited this program several times before my data collection, but I had not met the teacher with whom I worked. He and I had a two-hour meeting a few days before I began collecting my data. The purpose of the meeting was for him to approve the research I wished to do in his class. I explained the purpose of my research and my experience on the subject. He agreed to allow me to work in his class, but had several concerns. One of his concerns was the camera: we did not know how much it would bother the students and how much it would change the dynamic of the class. The other concern he had was that he already had some curriculum ideas in mind that he wanted to implement during the semester. We agreed that I would be finished in three weeks so that he would have enough time left in the semester to implement his ideas. We also agreed to try to use his ideas as much as possible so that there could be a smooth transition into what he wanted to do. We discussed some of the ideas he had. He wanted to focus on history, such as the study of the history of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, or the United States, and the history of religions. He wanted the students to understand the role we all play in the making of history and how our history is made collectively. He also wanted to include some grammar and spelling, and for the students to experiment with research.

I liked most of his ideas, especially the concept of people as the makers of history, and promised to think about it and to integrate it into what I was going to do. The concept of people as the subject of history is at the core of Paulo Freire's writings and one that I always keep in the back of my mind when working with adults. The teacher and I discussed how we should begin with the news, perhaps reading newspaper articles to discuss what is happening in the world, write about it and even introduce some grammar. Our meeting adjourned, and we agreed to look for reading materials to use.

I was very aware of the need to work together with the teacher. I knew how hard it could be for him to have a stranger in his class, especially at the beginning of the year. I was also aware of the pressure for time he seemed to feel and made it my own. I gave much thought to ways of connecting curriculum ideas for the year, and above all, I was very aware that it was his class and I was somebody allowed to intervene for three weeks. I also knew that the teacher had already formed relationships with some of the students from previous years and did not know how those students would accept a new person in the room. Furthermore, I did not know how this group was going to like or dislike working with theater. I knew a few of the students and most of the staff, since I had worked in the program in the recent past.

I had some ideas of what I was going to try to implement, such as theater and collective writing. I also knew that, by nature and definition, this was a literacy program where students also learned English, and, therefore, I had to try to re-invent it. I wanted to use theater for that re-invention and, through theater, do some other things, like reading, collective and individual writing, discussion, and experimenting with the molding and creation of reality. I believe that literacy is something that happens within the context of life and, therefore is difficult to teach isolated from life. I also knew that, most probably, the people with whom I was going to work, like others with whom I had worked in the past, had been denied the right to participate in some aspects of life, namely the reading part of it, and that I had to change that organization with them in order to invent a way for them to participate. I wanted to assist them in creating a new relationship to the reading reality, to mold their relationship to the reading world in a different way. By reorganizing this literacy class, I could imagine that many things were going to take place. I did not know the steps we were going to take in order to make these changes, but I was ready to try. I had some experience using theater and felt that theater was a vehicle for people to experiment with what is not yet known. The little experience I had with theater had taught me that through theater people could bring an experience as close to them as they wanted; yet the experience remained distant enough that it did not have to be threatening. I also knew from my readings in popular theater that theater could be a popular vehicle for experimenting with change. I wanted theater to be the vehicle for change of the reality of this literacy class in order to reach the frontiers of the unknown.

The Nine Sessions

The First Day of Classes

The first day of my data collection was also the first day the program met during the academic year. There were returning students as well as new students. There were no new members of the staff.

The first day of classes, I arrived at the center early to talk to the teacher about the readings we would use. I brought the Spanish newspaper and a video camera. He also had two newspapers, one from the weekend and the other from that same day. From these, we chose two articles about an incident in a Central American country. The two articles were about the same incident, but presented slightly different positions. We chose these articles, because we wanted to link the students to what was happening in the rest of the world. We wished to introduce the concept of history and to show that the same news had been exposed by different newspapers in different ways. This decision was important because it set us in a definite track in terms of the unit to be developed during the next three weeks . At moments, I have regretted choosing these articles, especially when staff members and/or students felt the discussions they inspired were too sad, too political or made the students anxious.

There were 19 students in the class, plus the teacher (whom I will refer hereafter as the teacher and/or Freddy), the staff member in charge of documentation of the program, and myself. The students and I were seated around three big tables, and the teacher was seated between two tables. I think that this arrangement revealed that this was a class -a different type of class, but nevertheless a class. Here is how the class began. The students were siting down talking to each other when Freddy, the teacher, began to talk.

Here We Talk, Discuss, Read, and Write

He introduced the class as one in which people "talk, discuss, read, and write." At the suggestion given by a student that they also fight, we answered, "That too, it's healthy sometimes." The teacher invited the students to get to know each other through an interview and stated that he had some readings to be done later in the class.

What made this class different from other classes is that the teacher introduced it as one in which "we read, write, discuss, and talk." The talking and discussions which made this class different took place in every single class while I was there. The teacher also accepted the comment made by the student that "we fight". Not only were talking and discussing built early into this class, but so were disagreeing, having different opinions, and even fighting. From that moment on, the statement made by the teacher about reading, writing, discussing, and talking was repeated in consecutive classes. When the teacher continued on with his introduction, he placed getting to know one another high on the agenda, even before reading. He mentioned that he had articles for the students to read, but that he wanted to do what was most important first, which was for the students to get to know one another.

Interviewing Each Other

After discussing with the students what an interview is, they decided on some questions that should be included in the interview. The students were then paired off. Each interviewed someone he/she had not known before, since there were new students as well as students previously in the program. Students interviewed each other for several minutes, and the videotape, during this activity, shows a group of adults talking to each other, chatting, getting to know themselves. A few took notes. It is interesting because the class that had reminded me of school only a few minutes before was no longer there. Now it looked like a group of adults who were just talking, maybe taking down an address or a phone number, or perhaps getting information about a community service. Some looked like they were having fun; they were laughing and perhaps even flirting with each other. Finally, they were asked by the teacher to introduce one another.

I believe that these introductions told us something about this group of people and what may make them different from others. The students gave reasons for being in school in New York, in the community, in the program. The interviews told us about the students' "lived lives," about their dreams, their hopes and their problems. This is a summary of what they said:

> Most of the students live in El Barrio, one lives in the Bronx and another in upper Manhattan. It is interesting to note that, even though they did not know each other, they shared with the class their full addresses, including apartment numbers. Some gave their telephone numbers, and a good number of them mentioned their religions. All of the women have children, and almost everyone mentioned children as one of the reasons for their participation in the program. The women also mentioned leaving school to get married or coming to this country looking for a better life for

> their children. Most of them are from Puerto Rico. Two are from the Dominican Republic, and another is from Ecuador. Some of the women and men shared their ages, and one told the group how much he was paying for the rent of a five-room apartment. The same person also talked about how the landlord wanted to evict him from his apartment and how he is fighting it. He mentioned that he is going to different offices and sending "lots of papers."

I have participated in many classes at Teachers College and other higher education institutions where students have been asked to introduce themselves and do not remember anyone giving their address and telephone number. So I thought it interesting that the students in this class offered this information voluntarily. The person who interviewed me asked me for my address and told me hers.

After we were all introduced, including the staff member in charge of documentation, the teacher and I, the teacher asked the students to talk about what they did last year. I learned that last year they went to museums and attended a demonstration at the Board of Education requesting more Latino representation on the Board. They studied how to use punctuation and had a workshop about battered women. The teacher repeated his early statement of how they have to read, write, and discuss in this class. He invited them to write about anything and everything. Again, my impressions were that this was not a regular class. It seemed to me that in this program the students were branching out to the outside community; they had visited museums and colleges. They were also introduced to talking about the problems of the community, such as battered women and poor Latino representation on the Board which makes the educational decisions for their children.

At that point, an elderly woman came into the class and precipitated a discussion about how it was never too late to learn. One of the new students mentioned how she was going to tell her husband to come to the program since the elderly woman had been eighty-one years old when she first participated. They discussed how the woman was an inspiration and applauded her when she left the classroom.

The teacher introduced the readings by talking about the importance of understanding history, understanding the reasons why we find ourselves in this country. He mentioned that we were going to read about a Central American country and began to distribute the readings. At that moment, I addressed the class for the first time. I explained to them that I was doing some research and the purpose of the camera. I talked about the importance of having programs especially designed for adults and how the camera would help me explain what happens in an adult education class. I also discussed how drama and theater work in a class with adults. The teacher asked the students if the camera would bother them. They said it would not. One of the students asked if the tapes could be used to get more funding for this type of program, the type of program that uses native language literacy. I acknowledged that that was a great idea to be looked into. Once this exchange was completed, they began to read silently. The class became a very quiet place. After a while, the students were asked to read out loud. The teacher asked for a volunteer. Silvia (one of the students) offered herself and others read after her. A student would read a paragraph, and the teacher would ask questions about it. Students answered, and the teacher asked more questions. Then the teacher asked who would like to read next. Once the entire article was read and discussed, the teacher asked the class where in America (North, South or Central) the country in the article was located, and several students answered that it was a Central American country. Before the students left, the teacher invited them to read the articles at home and to look for more articles about the incident in the newspapers. He also made sure everyone had signed the attendance sheet. As they left they talked to each other and to the teacher. Others went for coffee and talked around the coffee pot. The teacher mentioned that this was a good class but gave no reasons for this judgment.

I describe this first class more or less in detail because, in many ways, it may become important in the understanding of what would take place later. The teacher introduced this class as one in which students "talk, discuss, read, and write", invited them to introduce each other and linked the readings to the importance of understanding history. In this class, I also presented the purpose of the camera and the research.

Second Class

The next day I arrived early to experiment with the camera. I rearranged the room, which I later had to re-arrange at least once more. During this class, there were moments, especially at the end, when I worked hard in re-arranging the class for the theater to take place.

During the second class, people began to talk about the articles. They began using the type of language they needed in order to describe with their own words what they thought had happened in El Salvador. In the first class they had used what one could consider borrowed words from the newspaper articles, seemingly without questioning their meaning. During the second class, they exercised more the use of their own words. We remember that at the end of the first class the teacher invited the students to read at home and also to buy the newspapers if they could do so and to look for more articles about El Salvador. The invitation was accepted, and at the beginning of this second class one of the students told the teacher that she had brought an article about El Salvador. She read it to the group, and we found out that what she thought was the same incident, because the groups involved were the same, was actually a different incident. The article was published before the incident we were reading about took place, but the groups involved were the same. We tried to find out more about the groups mentioned in both articles. Whom did they represent? Who was represented and who was not? Who was interviewed by the newspapers and who was not? This organized the following discussion.

The student who brought the article thought that it was about the same incident because it mentioned the same group. When the teacher asked who this group was, many students answered simultaneously that it was an organization. One of the students said that it was an organization for the liberation of the country, because in that country, there were guerrillas and the government, and this organization was created to unite the guerrillas and the government. Another student (the one who brought the article) thought the organization represented the government. A third student thought that, because they were terrorists, they represented neither the government nor the people. A fourth student agreed with that assessment. Another student thought that they were people from the national army who had united to become guerrilla fighters. A sixth student said that they were fighting because they did not agree with the government. Finally, a seventh student said that they were something like the Puerto Rican nationalists. The teacher clarified whom this group represented.

The class proceeded to read again the article from the previous day. People read a paragraph out loud, and they talked about it. I wrote on chart paper, and the teacher, sitting at the front of the class, coordinated the discussion. The discussion was centered around what the articles said and what the students thought. There were times when we used reasoning: "If that happened, then this could not have happened." We went back and forth talking about what the articles said and what students thought happened. It was clear to me that the teacher and I were working hard in organizing the students to find out what motivated the individuals in the articles to say something, to defend themselves, or to accuse others.

It should be noted that in this class all the students participated in the discussion. There was also laughter from all participants, a lot of talking at the same time, students risking themselves by giving their own opinion, and students listening to each other. There were also moments when it was hard to understand what they said, because many students talked at the same time. I think, but cannot yet show, that this was a class in process, in the process of becoming something else.

We asked students to write their opinions about what happened. The teacher and the students decided on three questions, and he wrote them on the board. He invited them either to answer the questions or to pose them in a different format. Some students said they would give me the writings the next time we met. These writings were later used on various occasions.

Re-organizing to Provide the Space for Theater

At the end of the class, I divided the students in groups of fives to have what I called a debate. The different groups represented the groups described in the newspaper articles. I invited them to read the articles and to form opinions according to the groups they were representing. They had to defend their group in a debate to take place during the following class. I think that it was here that I began the reorganization of the class. I could observe a reorganization taking place in some of the classes. I share this process of reorganization in the rest of this chapter.

I tried to reorganize the class for some theater to take place, for theater to try to imitate real life, in which things can be changed. Theater could allow the students the opportunity to experiment with life, with its making, with its changing, to be actors and authors, and to change from a passive audience to active protagonists. I intended for this reorganization to take place within the context of a class, a class that was designed by people with assumptions about life and education. The class developed in the context of a program that, like most educational programs, is constrained by funding, test results, and people's biases. On the other hand, it is characterized by students' participation at all levels. I wanted to reorganize the class through theater for the students to understand the different ways the truth can be hidden in a newspaper article and how the truth is obscured from the moment events take place. I wanted them to make up something that resembled the truth or what for them could have been the truth. Interestingly enough, months later I was to find out through a Human Rights Report that what this group of adults developed as a script of what they thought happened in El Salvador was very similar to what has been reported as happening. This report, prepared by the Central American Refugee Center, gave a description of the investigation of the massacre of ten peasants which took place in a village in El Salvador, on September 21, 1988. The report concluded that:

> 1. The massacre of ten civilians was carried out by the salvadorean military in a planned and coordinated operation approved by high level officers of the Fifth Brigade.
>
> 2. The two versions of the incident given by the Salvadorean High Command were completely false and not supported by any evidence or reliable testimony. The highest levels of the Salvadorean Military High Command are participating in an effort to coverup the army's role in the massacre.
>
> 3. Soldiers and officers who participated in the massacre have not been brought to justice, and in fact continue to operate in the San Francisco area. Despite this, villagers, at great risk to themselves, have courageously offered their testimony in order to make the atrocity public.
>
> 4. There is no real willingness on the military's part, nor ability on the part of the civilian authorities, to prosecute those ultimately responsible for the massacre.
>
> 5. The only credible explanation for the massacre is that it is part of a well-planned strategy of total war and terror by the Savadorean army, which includes a pattern of massive human rights abuses and violations of Salvadoran and international laws regarding treatment of civilians.
>
> 6. The U.S. Embassy and U.S. military advisors appear to have assisted or acquiesced in the Salvadoran Army's coverup of the massacre, and took no steps to encourage the military, or assist civilian authorities to bring those responsible

> for the massacre to justice. The delegation is deeply concerned about the United States' role in the strategy of terror and repression by the Salvadoran Armed Forces.

I want to share the preliminary opinions the students had about the incident, and later in this chapter I share with you what this group was able to create collectively. I also want to share some of their writings. These writings can be divided into two sets. The first set answers the teachers' questions about the event and the second set is in essay format. The three questions in the first set were written on the board by the teacher and read as follows:

1. Who died?
2. Who killed them?
3. How do you know this?

(See Appendices C and D for samples of the students' writings.)

The Assembly

The following day we did not have a class, but an assembly. All the classes and the staff members came together and talked about the program. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and the staff had the opportunity to clarify regulations. Everybody had the opportunity to be introduced and to chat with one another. There were food and, of course, coffee at the assembly.

Third Class

The third class, which was the first one of the second week in the academic year, was important to me for several reasons. I believe this class marked the beginning of several processes. I think that some of these processes have a closure within the nine classes of this study while others do not. The first of these processes is the beginning of the theater through a debate, which I describe in more detail later. The second is the beginning of what I call grammar, a process in which teachers teach students about the formal structure of their language and during which students work with sentences, fixing them, looking at their elements, and trying to understand their semantic meaning. The third process that I believe begins is what I call the political pressure. This is when the teacher, members of the staff, and/or students, tell me or let me know that the students think or feel the content of the class is too political. Real or unreal I think this pressure influenced the decisions I made about the class. The fourth process that begins today is the process through which I ask students for feedback about what they like and dislike about the class, and they give it to me. On other occasions they offer me feedback without my asking.

For this class I came in early and as I was setting up the camera, the teacher indicated to me that he had heard several comments from students about the class being too political. This puzzled me, it raised many questions. Who made this comment and what did it mean? What was too political, the content about El Salvador or the discussion they had about it? Did the people who made the comment participate actively in the discussion? Were they naming the language they used during the discussion as too political? On the other hand, it also raised another set of questions. Has the content organized the class so that education no longer intends to be "apolitical"? Has the content re-organized this class so that education is outright political? I believe, but cannot prove, that this comment reorganizes the teachers to use grammar every time there is dialogue about oppression.

Rehearsing Through a Debate

I had planned to have a debate. Since the students sat in different places from the last class, I had to divide them in groups again and give them time to read and discuss their positions within their groups. We began the process with people talking to each other. I moved around the room, and so did the teacher. After a few minutes, I told the students that we were going to try to find out how the events took place, what had happened first. I invited the first group to speak. I also invited them to speak in first person plural (we) or singular (I) in playing their roles. The group representing the families began the discussion by accusing the army of the killings. The people representing the army defended themselves. The bishop also gave his opinion, and he pledged for peace. I moved around the room. People got involved; they all talked and discussed simultaneously. Silvia made several attempts to talk but she had a hard time getting the attention of the groups who were very involved in the discussion. Finally, I had to call the attention of the class towards Silvia who, with others, was representing the international organizations. She clarified that what she was about to say was not her opinion, but what was described in the newspapers. She was the only one to do this, since all the students had taken their roles much more personally and were speaking their own mind. They were using their language to describe, to name, what had "really" happened to people they had never met but were trying to identify with.

Even though everybody got involved, there were two groups that got involved in an outstanding way. One was the group representing the families of the killed peasants who were accused of being guerrilla fighters and the other group was the one representing the army. This involvement in a way represents the involvement of the accused and the accusers. The other groups were mere spectators who had something to say. At times, these spectators have more validity in what they say than the people involved, not only because of their presumed objectivity but because of their status in society. Examples of the spectators were the bishop and the international organizations. Thus, as it sometimes happens in real life, everybody participated, and the international bodies waited for every one to listen to them. The other groups, after hearing what they had to say, continued their discussion and arguments.

Naming our Reading Process

The activity went on for several minutes and, I think, allowed the students to get excited. After it was over I asked the students: What did you get from this exercise in terms of reading? The students responded that in order to find the truth about what was going on they needed analysis, discussion and reading comprehension. Others said that in order to find out what was going on, given the different versions provided by the different groups involved, they needed more than one article. They also said they needed more than one article because there was something new taking place everyday and more people were getting killed. Finally, they discussed history and how history gets written.

It is interesting to me that there was a synchrony, almost a chorus during this discussion. The students and I went back and forth completing each other's phrases. Students were almost able to predict what the next person was going to say. They were able to name their reading process as comprehension, understanding, analysis, and discussion in order to draw conclusions. They were also able to identify themselves as makers of history and to identify how history can be written in different ways. How what happens in El Salvador affects us here because we are from the same race, because we are human, because we are compassionate beings, and because what is happening to them could happen to us.

Another student followed our invitation to bring articles from the newspapers. I promised I would make copies for everybody for the following day.

Moving Away from the "Too Political"

After watching this tape several times, it was interesting to me how from this lively discussion we moved to grammar. The grammar was almost used as a reaction, as a resistance to what it could have become. It may have shown the fear to get away from skills, or maybe it attempted to make a whole between the liberating process and grammar. Maybe it attempted to give students what we thought they wanted. Or perhaps it had intended to give the impression of neutrality, to move the attention away from the "too political."

I began the grammar by introducing what a sentence is, and the students contributed providing examples. Today for the first time, the camera became an issue to the students. It interfered with the blackboard, and we had to move it several times. During this part of the session the students were writing a lot. They wanted to copy from the board, and the camera/board relationship was an issue. They contributed with sentences like: "I go to school" and "I bought shoes." We worked with these sentences, but later we worked with sentences from their written opinions about what happened in El Salvador. The teacher would ask if they had finished copying the sentence and students would answer, "Yes, teacher." We were no longer equals in the learning process.

Minutes before, when we were having the debate and they were naming their reading process, they all talked at the same time. It seemed to me that the grammar had silenced them. While, a few minutes earlier, they were pouring their lives into the discussion, now they were copying "empty content" from a blackboard. It seemed to me that they were no longer challenging, but only accepting by responding, "Yes, teacher." There were moments when the class was completely silent. The students were writing and the teacher waiting for them to finish.

In preparation for the following class, I asked them to write about a topic they would like to know more about. I also asked them what they thought about today's class, and they said it was fabulous. I asked, what would they add or take away from it. "Nothing," they answered. Still I asked, "Any suggestions?" Silvia said she would like to know more about the history of her country, Puerto Rico.

It was interesting to me that the students told me they thought the class was fabulous, great, that they would not change anything about it, would not add or take off a bit. It was interesting when I compared it to the comment made by the teacher before the class began that several students had indicated that the class was too political. The content of the class had not changed; in fact, the debate was about the same incident they had read about the two times before, and the discussion only elaborated on the language they had used in the second class to describe the events away from the newspapers and closer to their lives. The sentences they had written, when asked to write their own opinions about the killings, had been used even in the grammar.

At the end of the class people went to the coffee area and remained there talking to each other for a long time.

Overall, I began the discussion of this third class by stating that it marked the beginning of several processes. Among these I think that the most important relates to the theater/grammar dichotomy. We went from what I personally consider liberating to what I personally consider the most oppressive; from something that is full of words and events that almost resemble life to the most dry and artificial situation of grammar; from what I see in the tapes as a situation where students talk and discuss and re-shape events to one in which they are quiet, copy from a blackboard, listen to a teacher and almost become empty vessels; from one in which school, the traditional classroom, is almost lost to another, where school is present in all its forms, where teachers are the center and a blackboard becomes a symbol. There is a piece in the tape where the only object in the video picture is the blackboard and the only sound is the teachers' voices. I found it to be indicative of what went on during that time in this particular class. There was a board and the sound of teachers' voices. It is a move from what a class may become to what it has been and is. Maybe it is in the move from the theater; which allowed multiple experiences to come together, to the grammar, where the blackboard and the voices of teachers are the only entities in the class, that this class becomes less political. Maybe it is the way that this class can remain a class. Teachers can hold onto their power. Students can remain students. The power relationships in the class can be maintained. And, above all, the class can continue without being too political.

Fourth Class

Naming the Oppressed and the Oppressor

The following day, we arranged the class as it would remain for the next five classes. The coordinator of the program came to visit the class and stayed until the end. Today the students began their English as a Second Language class, which was held immediately prior to this one. We began the class by reading the articles that the student had brought the day before. In the middle of the class, we also read an article about an incident in El Salvador that took place about thirty years ago. The incident was about an election that was won by the communist party. The article, "The Air Century," is from Eduardo Galeano's book Memoria del Fuego III. El Siglo del Viento. This class had quiet a bit of dialogue and discussion. A different type of language emerged through which the students placed the incident we were studying in the historical context of events that have occurred in El Salvador. Students named the oppressor in El Salvador as they also named the oppressed. They said that the people that always get killed are the peasants, the poor, who always have to struggle against an unfair government because they are hungry. Another student talked about how the people who are oppressed have to organize in a guerrilla movement to struggle for freedom, how people are always fighting for justice in what belongs to them. The language that the students showed today was more specific in terms of naming the oppressed and the oppressor and talking about the struggle for justice. It was interesting to me that a student talking about "schooling" said that the people who attend school always want to talk for those who have not, for the ones who are hungry, the ones that do not know, and then [the educated person] burns them.

In Chapter IV, through vignettes, I will share the language that emerged during this class as well as the language that emerged throughout the nine classes. The language that emerged today seemed to indicate that the readings about the history of El Salvador organized the students to talk about their naming of oppression and the struggle for justice. They talked about their experiences with people who had formal schooling and the reasons for social struggle. The students began to leave as one was still talking about her experiences in her own country. As with the last session, some of the students had coffee before going home.

Meeting with the Steering Committee

The day had not ended for me. The program had a meeting of the steering committee, which is composed of all the staff members and student representatives. I presented to the committee members what I was trying to do and answered their questions. One of the concerns expressed during that meeting was how I was going to integrate literacy. Interestingly enough, I gave the example of the grammar.

Fifth Class

The following day another student brought a newspaper, thinking that there were articles about El Salvador. We began this class with a report from the student who is English-dominant about an article from Newsweek which I had given her to read. The importance of this detail is that the student validated her strongest language along with her bilingualism, since she had to give the report in Spanish as a benefit to the students who were Spanish speakers. The other is that we were exposed to the way the English-speaking press was approaching the incident that we had read about in the Spanish-speaking press.

Re-writing the World and Writing the Word

We began the development of the first scene of the play. I invited the students to imagine what happened in El Salvador and also to debate in the first person as if it were happening to them. We began a process in which students told me what to write. They first discussed it, negotiated it, and finally I wrote it on the chart paper. Then we read it out loud. For the first time, students were reading what they wrote instead of the language used by newspaper reporters. Language represents how the reality of an individual is expressed and understood. To help the reader, I include the draft of the script in appendix A. Appendix B presents the final script, and its English translation.

As I have explained in my theoretical framework, the students' writing and reading were in Spanish, since this is the language in which much of their reality takes place and, therefore, is expressed. For the benefit of the reader, I have also included samples of the students' writings in appendices C, D, and E; and of classroom readings in appendix F. The reader should consider that sometimes translations do not carry the exact meaning of the original, since language is the representation of a cultural and historical reality and, therefore, difficult to translate precisely.

The students developed the first scene by discussing and negotiating what to write and helping themselves with information from the articles. They also created elements, such as a spy, to make the incident closer to their perception of what happened. The discussion was not as lively as the one they had during the debate, but as in the latter, everybody participated in it. I participated in the development of the scene. I invited people to read. I participated in the discussion and at times I raised ideas and issues for discussion. Students were really involved in the process, to a point where a student refuses when asked to read the role of a spy in the script. This student had raised the existence of a spy during the discussion and, when we were taking roles to read what we had developed, said he would not play the role of a spy.

During the ninth and last class, we learned from this student that he would not play the role of the spy because it reminded him of when he had been in prison, and therefore made him too anxious. Since he had too many bad memories about it he could not read the part. Both of these vignettes will be shared in Chapter IV.

I think that this is the first time the class was involved in the process of writing something collectively and they seemed to enjoy it. I asked them once we finished the first scene if they had enjoyed it, how they liked the exercise. They all answered in chorus. They said that it was great, that they liked it, that it was good. I also asked them if they would dare to act it. They again talked at the same time, they got enthusiastic about it. "Yes, they would like to act it," they responded. One of the students said she would like to act the part of the soldier. Carlos said that if they would act it they would have to make sure the role of the spy was real and proceeded to explain his ideas.

From Theater to Grammar

From this lively scene, which was also organized in the third class, we went on to grammar. This time I asked the students to give me a sentence and Silvia gave me one "The class was very interesting this afternoon." I used the phrase to explain the different parts of the sentence. Later on, we tried to identify these elements of the sentence in the sentences they had written a few classes before. The teacher participated in the grammar lesson. Again, the class was silent. The students again got involved in copying from the blackboard. The teachers from the front of the room, showing no heads on the videotape, worked with the students in dividing sentences in different elements and fixing them. Again we did something as involving as theater and then we moved to grammar.

A Student Speaks to the Class

Before the class was over, the teacher introduced Silvia and another student as the representatives from the class to the steering committee. The steering committee, he explained, is a group composed of people who work in the program and of students which represent each class. It meets every two weeks to discuss what should be done in the program. He introduced both students, but it was Silvia who spoke. She talked for about three minutes. First she told the students that, beginning the following week, they were going to collect fees. She said people do not have to pay the fee all at once. She also asked for a volunteer to collect the money and talked about the coffee. She said that she and the other representative had been taking care of it but that other people should cooperate. She also told the students that soon they were going to have the opportunity to elect representatives, since she was going to another program probably in January. She said, "The people who will be elected should be willing to be like us." Students began to leave, and somebody volunteered to get the money. She also asked who was going to attend the High School Equivalency class which was beginning the following week. She ended her presentation without the other representative's participation. He did not say a word. Silvia reminded me of a teacher; she has authority in this class and uses it the same way a teacher would, I thought.

Another week ended and, as usual, the students gathered around the coffee before departing. Silvia was among them, explaining that in the other class they will be taught how to take the GED (General Equivalency Diploma, or High School Equivalency test). Her phrase brings up concerns I have about being taught to take a test or to get a license.

The Sixth Class

The sixth session was conflicted to me. On the one hand, it is the session that I liked the most. I liked the energy I felt in it very much. But, following this session I felt very bad. I will describe it, and, at the end, I will share the reasons for some of my feelings.

I arrived at the classroom early that morning. It was the beginning of another week, and, over the weekend, I had made copies of two reading pieces. One was from The Little

Prince and the other from El Titiritero. I chose them because of their use of dialogue and the Latin American theatrical piece in El Titiritero (The Puppeteer).

Reading for Theater

We began reading The Little Prince and looking at the use of dialogue; then we proceeded to read El Titiritero. We read the latter three times. The first time we read it using the pattern that we had created. People first read it by themselves, and then we took turns reading it out loud. After each segment we discussed it. This time we also discussed what comprises a scene and an act and the fact that this was a theater piece. We also discussed vocabulary. The second time we read it out loud, and we took roles. People gave intonation to the reading, and I made some of the background noises with a pencil and the table. When we finished everybody applauded spontaneously. It is difficult to describe the energy which emanated from this activity. Students were very involved, and their clapping was a product of this energy and involvement. The third time we read it, I distributed the different roles to be played. I also distributed the roles of the people who were to make the background noises and those who were going to describe the scenario. Every time somebody read, other persons made background noises and I changed the lighting by turning the classroom lights on and off. I was the only one who got up, but the rest of the participants were totally involved in making it work. The noise level was so high, created by many people making background noises and others reading out loud, that the camera was not able to pick up all the voices and it got confused, which it showed by the fluctuation in volume. When we completed reading it for the third time, students again applauded without teacher intervention. At the end, students told me they liked the exercise and would like to continue their participation.

Acting the Alternatives for the Second Scene

We continued by reading the scene we had developed the time before. Once we read it we began developing the second scene. We were trying to decide how the scene could be represented, and I tried to act the different alternatives they gave me. They decided for the alternative they thought was more realistic. A student stood up to help me act the alternative chosen. This helped the rest of the class to decide, through discussion, the language we were going to use to represent this alternative. We described the most terrible part of the incident, the killings. I am attaching the first draft of this scene with the appendices, for the reader to understand what the students were involved in. (See Appendix A.)

A Student Speaks for the Class

Once we were finished with the second scene, Silvia told me "ya terminamos esto, manana otra clase, please"; in English: "we finished this, tomorrow another class, please". After Silvia made this comment, we read the two scenes already developed and discussed how they were similar to theater. Silvia made the comment that we could even make a movie out of it. Another student compared the scene to a novel where one has to imagine what the author describes as the background. When asked why "she" and/or "they" did not want to finish, Silvia said that we had been doing the same thing for too many days, and that people went home thinking about it. At this moment Freddy got involved. I had asked the students to tell me what they would like to study if they did not want to continue with what we were doing. The teacher then asked what would be of interest to them to continue reading in the class. Silvia said (for the second time since the semester began) that she would like to study the history of Puerto Rico. Another student, who was sitting next to her, said that he would like to study the history of all Latin American countries. Other students did not give their opinion, and when asked for it said that we (the teacher and I) should decide what they must study. Besides Silvia and the man seated next to her, nobody offered suggestions. At the end of the class, three things happened that were very interesting. First, Silvia approached Freddy and I to tell us that she had to say what she said because she had to speak for the other members of the class since she was their representative. Another student came and apologized for what Silvia had said and told me that she did not think it was the feeling of all the students in the class.

My Own Reflections

Now I will proceed to discuss what I think but cannot prove. Many things changed today. First, today was the first day of the week and the first day after some of the students had attended the G.E.D. class. It was also the first time we had done theater without working on grammar. We had, in other words, disrupted the relationship between the theater and the grammar. For the first time we acted in class, acted both the reading and the alternatives to describing something. It was also the day we had to develop the scene when the peasants were killed. The result was a strong scene which the reader can judge for himself. It was the first time they met after Silvia and the other student representative had been introduced with the power received by being class representatives to the staff steering committee. I do not know the role these elements played in the organization of this class and in organizing Silvia to tell me she wanted to do something different. She also told me that she wanted to study the history of Puerto Rico. At that point I debated introducing another topic because of the teacher's comments about the class being too political and because of my own insecurities about not being entirely free to decide the curriculum with the students. But now I felt I had to finish the script since Freddy, in a polite fashion, kept reminding me that my three weeks were almost over. I decided to type the draft of what I had done so far with the students. The other things that went through my head were that these were positive events, that the fact that they rebelled was positive in nature, and that I had organized them toward it by constantly asking them if they liked what we were doing and asking for their feedback. They could exercise the power of implementing their decisions about the class. It was the fact that I felt that in many ways Silvia was not a participant but a staff member that bothered me. Was she speaking for herself? Other students? Or was she speaking for the staff? Why would this bother me? What made her feel that she had to tell me that it was not she but other students who did not like to continue with the class and that she as the delegate of the class had to speak for them? I do not know. Another thing that bothered me was that if they felt that we had spent too many days doing the same thing it may have meant that they had no experience working on a project during a period of time in the class. After the end of the class the students went for coffee and this reminded me that the class was still the same. I just had to find a way of reorganizing it to provide space to finish the script.

The Seventh Class

I had a typed copy of the two scenes we had developed ready for use during the class. Before the class began, I asked the teacher for assistance and explained to him how I thought his lack of participation during the previous class was not helpful to the process. He indicated that the male student representative had told him it was the camera that bothered people. It surprised me since I had no indication of this. He also said students were bored with the class because we had worked on the same topic for three weeks. I reminded him we had only met six times and we had worked on other things besides the theater. I again wondered if in the past, this class did curriculum over a period of time. I also thought how the reasons given, i.e., the camera, the length of the process, and how the process was too political, were the very same reasons why I thought the process was effective. The teacher had not made xerox copies of reading materials for the class and, therefore, we began this class with grammar. I want to note that this is the first time we began a class with grammar.

Beginning with Grammar

We began the session working with the students on complex sentences. The teacher and I took turns working with students on the blackboard. I felt more than ever that the organization of this class was different from any of the previous classes. The teacher was very involved in this class, and after he worked with another sentence, we invited the students to correct their own writing. This was also the first time during the year they were involved in this type of activity. The students' writings were distributed to them and for some time they worked on them. They were helping each other, and the teacher rotated among them. I also rotated from time to time. Silvia wanted us to fix the blackboard and when I moved it and asked if she could see better she told me she could see, that it had not bothered her, but another student. Again, she was only speaking for someone else.

Re-Organizing for the End

After the above exercise was completed and Freddy had picked up the writings from the students, I distributed the copy of the draft of the script. Students read it while I explained how I copied it exactly as they had dictated it to me, without changing anything. Silvia found a spelling mistake. Freddy asked her if she wanted to fix it and she did not answer. He asked three times if she wanted to correct it and finally she said she had already corrected it. At different times, two other students read little pieces from the script and questioned their accuracy. Then Freddy began a review of the process we went through to develop the script. When asked about the different steps involved in the process, the students gave the following answers: they said that they read several articles, they discussed, acted, and analyzed them until they reached a conclusion of what happened. They also said they had to develop dialogues as if they were part of the incident that took place. They used the dialogue to understand what took place. A student stated that they had reproduced what had happened in El Salvador to those people. Finally a student who had been involved in the discussion said that they should finish the script. Freddy said he did not want to impose it and asked the students if they wanted to finish it. Most of them answered yes. I wanted to make sure and asked how many people wanted to finish it. Everybody raised a hand. I asked for those who did not want to finish it and no hands were raised. After they decided they wanted to finish the script, Freddy said that we would work on it for an extra day. I invited the students to think about a title and some students voiced their choice. As students left, one could hear Silvia in the background "Mrs. and Misses, do you want coffee?"

As I had suspected, the typed script reorganized the students to finish the play. I felt great!

The Eighth Class

During this class, we read the first scene and made changes to it. Students discussed the changes and we continued doing the same with the second scene. After we finished this process and before we began the development of the third and last scene, I asked the students what they had learned from a situation happening far away in a Central American country. This precipitated a discussion, through which a different type of language emerged. The context of the discussion was about who was really at fault of what was taking place in the Central American country. They said that the soldiers that killed the peasants were not at fault, because they only obeyed orders, that the people giving the orders were in high places, "the ones on top." They noted that another government was giving economic and military aid to the Central American country and therefore they had something to do with the killings, even though this was happening because of a civil war. When I asked if they could identify a pattern in what was taking place, they said that the people who always die are the poor people, the peasants. They were manipulated by the people on top. The people who have studied do not die; they are the ones who give the orders, they said. Even the soldiers who executed the orders were not at fault; they were also victims. The big fish eats the small fish, a student concluded. I thought that they were showing me new attitudes towards literacy.

I introduced the concept of peace and social justice and asked for their reactions. They said that the problem in all countries is that there are too many poor people who are starving to death while others have millions. The dictators take millions while the people do not have anything to eat, a student indicated. So, I asked, how can we finished the script? Many students participated in this discussion. This discussion became the third scene.

The Last Scene Emerges

As language flowed from the dialogue, the script flowed from the language; as we read more about El Salvador, we became more literate about that country. The first student to participate in the discussion said that we should help the needy. Another one responded we should help them so that they can help themselves through their work. We should offer them the opportunity and the means to survive. I asked, "If they are peasants, what do they need?" Again, many answered at the same time, "Machinery, land to harvest, seeds to plant, will power, support, school and church, health and hospitals and motivation." Another student added, "And that the government not steal their production once it is harvested," which got translated for the script into "Respect for private property." Finally, they added respect for human rights.

They also had a discussion about education. A student said that there are people who have not studied, but are witty, while there are others who have formal education, but are not comfortable with words. Another student answered that they have will power in El Salvador, because they are fighting for what belongs to them. We then discussed how we were going to present this scene and once we agreed, we discussed the titles. They gave the following alternatives: "Struggle for Power; Struggle for Justice; The Revolution; Equality; The Conquest of Victory." They voted and most of them voted for "Struggle for Justice." A student showed a page where she had written her choices and the reasons behind each of them. (See Appendix E.)

Again We Moved to Grammar

As in other classes where a liberating process took place, again we moved to grammar when we completed the script. It is as if we needed a pendulum. Maybe we were afraid of the reactions of others. It will be interesting for me to see myself doing this process again in another program with no teacher next to me and to see this teacher with no Klaudia next to him. Would we choose to do the same? Was it that we saw grammar as a filler because we did not have any readings? I thought the teacher was going to bring something today for the students to read, but he did not. This time we asked the students to write three sentences in their notebooks. Once they finished we asked a couple of students to give us their sentences which we wrote on the board and worked with them. I have always been surprised by the type of sentences students write when asked to write isolated sentences. The same people who had the discussion described above also wrote. "I went to my son's house to see a kitty that he brought to his house. I had a good time playing with her" and "Who killed the hen and her chickens."

Finally, this time a person who is usually quiet but sometimes complains about the blackboard or what the class decides to do shared the following sentence: "Why is it that in Hispanic countries, when the people elect a government and when the government does not come through, they blame the Americans." As in other times during discussions when people who think differently tell their opinions, one way or another, this student used what I call oppressive grammar to give hers. In this project students always gave opinions that were respected by others. I think the difference was that at the beginning their opinions were insecure. They did not know who represented whom in El Salvador, while by now, their opinions are based on facts they have discussed and analyzed. They have become literate in the topic and are able to write their own conclusions.

At the end, the person who gave the last sentence offered coffee several times, and finally said that, if they did not want it, it would have to be thrown out. Students left, and, as they were leaving Freddy said, "Until tomorrow," to which several students answered, "If that's God's will."

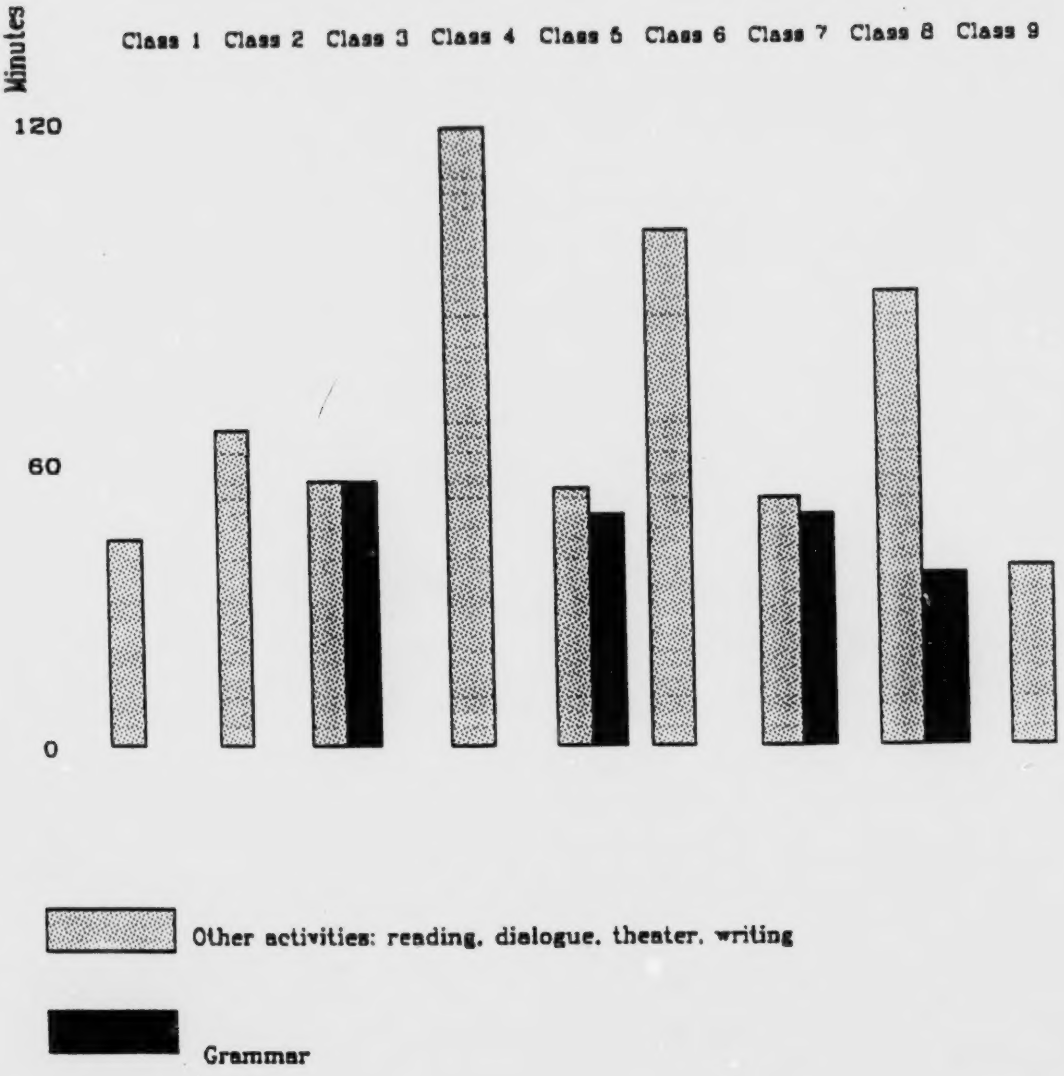
Reflecting on the Grammar

In this story I have referred frequently to the grammar, a process that I qualify as being oppressive. Since events can only be understood within the context of the whole, in this section I attempt to summarize the use of grammar as it took place throughout this project. The process of grammar began in the third class when the theater itself began. We saw it again during the fifth and seventh class.

In the third class, I made the comment that I believe the grammar was an organized element and that it was first organized by the coment, made by a student, that the class was too political.

I believe but cannot prove that, every time there was a dialogue about the political nature of life, namely the events in El Salvador, the class shifted to grammar. As you can see on Chart I on the following page, the grammar begins in the third class and takes place for exactly sixty

CHART 1


Minutes
Class 1
Class 2
Class 3
Class 4
Class 5
Class 6
Class 7
Class 8
Class 9
120
60
0
Other activities: reading, dialogue, theater, writing
Grammar

minutes, or half of the session. During the first half, there had been a debate, discussion and reading. There is no grammar during the fourth class. In the fifth class, the grammar takes fifty percent of the class, following reading, discussion and collective writing. During the sixth class, we do not find grammar but we find it again in class number seven. In the seventh class, again time spent on grammar takes about sixty minutes, or half of the session.

In conclusion, out of nine classes, the grammar takes approximately fifty percent of the time in classes three, five and seven. It also takes place during the eighth class, but only for twenty-seven minutes.

In the third class we have the debate, then we have grammar. In the fifth class, we began the development of the first scene, and this is followed with fifty minutes of grammar. In the sixth class we did not have grammar, but almost at the end of the class and after we had finished developing the second scene, Silvia tells me that the students do not want to continue with the script. At the beginning of the seventh class, the teacher tells me that the camera is bothering the students and that they were bored with the class because we had worked on the same topic for three weeks. We began this seventh class with grammar, and we stayed with it for half of the class. During the eighth class, we developed the third scene of the script, followed by twenty-seven minutes of grammar. With exception of the seventh class, grammar always takes place during the second half of the class.

The grammar is also a process in which people copy from the board, are silent and give sentences like: "I go to school," "I bought shoes." It is a process during which they answer, "yes, teacher."

In the ninth class, students reflected on the total process and talked about its different stages. There was no mention of grammar during this discussion. It was as if it had never taken place.

The Last Class

We have reached the last class. In many ways, I think this class could stand by itself; however, we need to know the context of the other classes in order to understand it. It was a short class. That day, when I got to the program with the scripts already typed and ready to be distributed among the students, I found out that the classroom was bursting with people from the other class, staff members and invited guests. I did not know that a celebration was to take place. The teacher told me later that, even though he knew about it, he forgot to mention it to me because he thought that by that day I was going to be finished and no longer in the program. They were celebrating a book that had been published. It was a beautifully presented reader which had been put together with stories of the lives of students from the program. The people who had done the interviews and had written the book, and the people whose life stories were in the book were also there for the celebration. As in other gatherings, there was food, soda, and, of course, coffee. After the celebration was over, we met as a group.

Reflecting on the Process

I think that this session is a reflection of the process we had gone through during the first eight classes of the year. Maybe it even gives answers to what happened before or provides for space to talk about our shared experiences. I want to share what they said and try to give it a context.

We are the Writers

Even before everyone had the opportunity to see the script, one of the students, who I will call Laura, gets one of the copies. While looking through it and smiling, she calls Carlos who is seating across from her and, showing him the script says to him: "Look, the writers!" The exact transcript of this moment, as of other moments, will be presented both in Spanish and in English in Chapter IV.

Laura's name and the names of all the class participants appeared on the last page of the script under the heading "Writers." I think that Laura thought it was important and, maybe because of it, shared it with Carlos. One could also speculate that the student wanted to share with someone else her new identity as a writer. Later in the class, we discussed this moment, and Laura stated that it made her emotional to see her name as one of the writers.

I distributed the script and people began looking at it very intensively. Maybe they were reading it by themselves. I told them how everything in the script represented what we did together, how I did not change anything and that, therefore, the script was full with their words. I asked then what they thought about it but nobody responded verbally. They were all reading it intensively. Finally we proceeded to read it out loud. We took roles reading it. It was interesting to me that while watching this video I noticed that people were very quiet while the others read, and also to notice the synchrony of everybody turning the page at the same time. All students turned the pages in perfect harmony as if they were all one and one whole. This can be observed twice on the tape.

Reading for Analysis

Once we finished reading, some students talked about how they got emotional while reading it. Others talked about how it was easier to read their own words rather than the words used in the newspaper articles. Maybe, as Paulo Freire stated, through reading their words they were also reading their worlds. Laura talked about how it made her very emotional to see her name as one of the writers. Another student mentioned that, at the beginning, he was confused about where we were going with the process. He added that when he began reading the articles, he was not reading for understanding and that it was not until he realized that what we were reading was important that he decided to read for analysis. He continued by saying that he took the articles home to continue reading and analyzing them.

I asked the students if they could tell me why they did not want to continue. I also asked them to try to differentiate between the process and the content. The only person who answered my question was Silvia. She said that it was the topic, the content, that she also saw it in television, that she would imagine it, that she would get nervous, but regardless of these feelings, she wanted to investigate it more. This time she chose to speak for herself and did not say anything about others. Nobody else gave comments about not wanting to continue with the script development. Somehow this organizes Carlos to refer to the time he did not want to participate as a spy, and he shared the story about being in prison and how it was so hard to remember. Somehow this session provided the space for Carlos to not only give an explanation about an incident that took place classes before, but also to share something about himself, about his life with the group. And the group listened to him very carefully. Laura, another student, also shared how she got anxious the day before the debate. She talked about how she stayed up until two in the morning reading the articles and thinking about her own conclusions before participating in the debate.

We Can Write a Novel About Our Lives

At this point Freddy asked them whether, regardless of how nervous or anxious it made them feel, it was worth going through this process. Many students answered yes simultaneously. Another student added that, using a similar process, we could even write a novel about their lives: how she came to this country, how she began, and how people have to struggle here, without knowing English. Again, this student chose to share some aspects of her life and her struggles with the class. She also made her world sound collective: "how people have to struggle here, without knowing English." She made it sound as collective as culture, the culture of the non-English speaking immigrants.

Disagreeing with the Teacher

Finally, after I thanked them, and they thanked me, Freddy asked the students why they were not reading the script with the same emotion as when they read "The Puppeteer." A student disagreed with this evaluation and explained how she felt a lot of emotion when reading the script and how, while others read, she felt as if the events that took place in El Salvador were actually taking place while reading the script. Furthermore, she stated how when the others read, they sounded as if they could be the people that the event happened to.

Several things are important for me through this exchange. First, the teacher did not bring any material to this class and chose to continue talking about the script.

The other is that this student clearly chose to disagree with the teacher. She talked about being moved by the script. She was moved while listening to others reading it. In the next chapter, I will share the vignettes that transcribed the moments described above. I believe that these vignettes will provide the reader with a first hand understanding of the type of language that emerged during this class.

Students Talk About Their Lives

Freddy asked the students what they would want to study, and I reminded him that the students had mentioned they wanted to study the history of Puerto Rico and/or the history of other Latin American countries. A discussion about history emerged, and people talked about the past and the present, the situation of Puerto Rico in the past and in the present. The discussion reached home and some students chose to talk about their lives when they were growing up in Puerto Rico, what they had and did not have. A student talked about how, in the past, their parents could not send them to school, but that their parents "would teach them important things, like how to work since one was a small child."

Silvia talked about how the poor people of Puerto Rico had to serve the rich because of the lack of jobs available and how the rich could even buy the votes for their candidates because people were so poor. Another student talked about how she grew up poor in the countryside but she ate well. Silvia interrupted her three times, and the third time the students told her, "But you gave your opinion. I heard you. So now let me finish giving mine. Each one has a way to live, like the teacher has said, and each one has different opinions." Silvia did not respond.

The class was almost over and I think that in this last part of the class the script had re-organized students to talk about their lived lives, and about life in Puerto Rico. Even those that did not talk in other classes talked in this one. One student even told Silvia to give her a chance to talk and to give her opinion. They became knowledgeable about a situation and they even wrote about it. Finally, before they left, the student representative, who had not said a word to the class four classes before when he and Silvia were introduced as class representatives, addressed the class. He asked for somebody to volunteer to clean up the coffee and a student responded "I have been saying for a long time to finish with the coffee." Many people protested her comment and they had a discussion about it. Then, I knew the process with this script was completed and another one was to begin. I am including the final copy of the script as it was given to the students for the reader to see what, in my opinion, organized this class. (See Appendix B).

CHAPTER IV

DATA INTEGRATION

"Recapturing distant childhood as far back as I can trust my memory, trying to understand my act of reading the particular world in which I moved was absolutely significant to me. Surrendering myself to this effort, I re-created and re-lived in the text I was writing, the experiences I lived at a time when I did not yet read words."

Freire, 1983

In this chapter I attempt to integrate what I have learned from the theories of liberatory or emancipatory education, critical literacy, native language literacy, and popular theater with the discourse of the data. I refer back and forth both to the story of the nine classes and the theoretical framework. I also use vignettes to provide the reader with the multiplicity of voices in the class.

I attempt to show how students and teachers organize themselves to dialogue and to name oppressive conditions in which "life is lived". I also show how by engaging in the reading of the word and the world, the adult students also engage in what they call "reading for analysis", to re-name the world through an analyzed word. Finally, I show how through the use of "popular theater," students examine critically the news, and how society organizes the shaping of reality. Through this process, the participants engage in the collective development of a theater script that carries their perception of an event, which they framed within a historical context.

Naming the World Through Dialogue

As it can be appreciated in the story, it is from the first exchange between the teacher and the students during the first day of class that the concept of dialogue, multiplicity of voices, and analysis are invited into the classroom. The teacher states: "Because here we basically read, write, discuss, and talk, that is the class." It seems to me that the teacher brings a clear understanding of the concept proposed by Dewey, that ideas have to be developed during public discussion.[1] The teachers opens the lead for language to emerge, and through discussion gives space to the multiplicity of voices and the collective set of meanings to emerge. Furthermore, he validates the students' cultural universe by inviting them to share and to open the windows of their lives through their talking and discussing. He interlocks reading and writing to talking and discussing in a unit formed by the context of the language and the culture of the people. As Freire has stated, language should be stimulated through discussions where facts are analyzed, since it carries the history and the perceptions of the world of the people that speak it. He has further stated that reading and writing are part of the same process and, of course, that reading is based on language. The teacher is providing a space for a "talkative class," a class in which individuals are invited to speak their voices, a class where one can ask questions and disagree with the answers.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Freddy: Bueno, buenas tardes

Estudiantes: Buenas tardes

Freddy continua: Yo soy Freddy [dice su nombre completo], estoy aqui hace como año y medio enseñando una clase de inglés por la mañana, y esta clase de español por la tarde, ah, entonces lo que pensaba hacer hoy, pensabamos hacer hoy es, ah, primero lo principal será presentarnos, para que todo el mundo se conosca, empiece a conocerse, y ah, luego hablar un poco de la clase, de lo que hicimos el año pasado y le voy a pedir a la gente que estuvieron aquí el año pasado que hablen un poco de eso. Y por fin principiar a bregar, porque básicamente aqui leemos, y escribimos, y discutimos, y hablamos, esa es la clase

Silvia: y peleamos, y nos jalamos por las greñas

[algunos estudiantes se rien]

Freddy: ah también, tambien muy saludable muchas veces. Entonces tenemos algo para leer mas luego, pero quería empezar primero presentándonos, y lo que me gustaría hacer es que ustedes se presenten uno al otro, entoces la forma para hacer eso es que, eh, podemos usar una forma de entrevista.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Freddy: Well, Good afternoon

Students: Good Afternoon

Freddy continues: I am Freddy, Freddy [he gives his complete name], I am here since more or less a year and a half, teaching an English class in the morning, and this class in Spanish in the afternoon, ah, then what I thought we would do today, what we thought we would do today, is, ah, first the most important will be to introduce ourselves, for everybody to get to know each other, to begin to get to know each other, and, then, to talk a little about the class, of what we did last year and I will ask the people who were here last year to talk a little about it. And then to begin to deal, because here we basically read, and write, and discuss, and talk, that is the class

Silvia: and we fight and and we pull our hair

[some students laugh]

Freddy: Ah, that too, very healthy. Then we have something to read for later, but I wanted to begin by

> introducing ourselves, and I would like for you to introduce each other eh, we can use an interview form.

As we can observe, the teacher also invites the people to introduce themselves to each other before anything else takes place in the class. It is through this introduction that students talk and share their cultural universe. They talk about who they are. They share their addresses, their religion, something that in the mainstream of this culture is private. They share culturally shaped experiences. They talk about the problems with the landlord, their world of immigrants looking for a better life. An aspect of what Maxine Greene calls the students' "lived lives" is already with us. The participants are able to name these different aspects of their lives, because they are doing it in the same language the experiences were lived in. They are speaking in their native language, in Spanish, which not only carries the meaning of their cultural heritage, but also the history of their class struggles and the reality of their situation in the United States. According to Freire, language carries the perception of the world of the group that speaks it, and certainly this group was engaged in sharing their experiences, their perceptions of the world with one another.[2] They are able to name their immediate oppressors, the landlords that own the buildings from which they are being evicted. They speak of their reality, which is different from other realities. They are invited to speak their language, and, therefore, their voices are able to name eviction, landlord, and the lack of English-speaking ability, as real oppressors. They also voiced their reasons for hope: they want to help their children, they want a better life for their children.

The concept of history is introduced in this class. History from the point of view of what they did the year before, the collective activities they had, visiting museums and participating in demonstrations. The teacher discusses the importance of understanding why we are here, in New York, when we all come from different towns, different countries, and arrived at different times. Why do we find ourselves here in this country? He introduces the readings about El Salvador, a Central American country. Given the vast number of immigrants from Central America that have come to the United States during the last few years, the introduction of this reading within the context of history is very meaningful.[3] It is meaningful because it opens the possibility for analysis of the economical and political conditions that urged people to immigrate. It is not by chance that we are here, as it is not by chance that other ethnic groups are coming with us presently and so many others came before us. Our individual immigration can only be understood in the context of others reaching the borders as well. It can only be understood in the political and economical struggle of entire groups, nations, and social classes. Our individual immigrations are only an expression of a self-organized totality. The articles to be read and discussed will provide us with a way to examine the political, social and economic foundations of what is happening in El Salvador today and the injustices that force people to immigrate.

In the second class, the students discussed what happened in a particular incident which ocurred in El Salvador, a massacre in which ten peasants were killed because of an alleged association with the guerrilla movement. They begin to describe with their own words what they think happened in El Salvador. They tried to make sense of the atrocity; they tried to name the oppressive conditions; they give words to the events described in the two newspaper articles; they give emotions to the "objectivity" with which the articles attempted to describe the killings. They tried to make subjects what the articles had made objects. They "humanized" the dehumanizing. Freire has stated that, while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is man's [and woman's] vocation. He further states that this vocation is constantly negated, "it is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity."[4] He further states that dehumanization is a result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressor, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed.[5]

Later in this session, when we read an article a student had brought to class, we found out it was not about this incident but another which had occurred weeks before that had involved the same groups. The students placed the two incidents within a historical framework. Historical events do not take place in isolation. We tried to identify if the people involved in the two incidents were the same; who was accused; who were the accusers; who had a voice in the articles; and who did not; who was supporting who and from whom; who was protected by the news and the reason why people were fighting in El Salvador. We used what Gueulette refers to as popular mass media techniques for the enhancement of "conscientization" of critical consciousness among adult learners.[6]

Boal describes Newspaper Theater in terms of various elements. He said that for the first time, in this type of theater the people are creative and not only consumers of the theater. Its main objective is to demystify the alleged "objectivity" of journalism. Among Boal's Newspaper theater techniques, the following were used in the study:[7]

> a) Simple reading: detaching the news from the context of the newspaper.
>
> b) Crossed reading: two news items are read in crossed (alternating) form, one throwing light on the other.
>
> c) Complementary reading: data and information generally omitted by the newspaper of the ruling classes are added to the news.

d) Parallel action: actors mime parallel actions while the news is read, showing the context in which the reported event really occurred.

e) Improvisation: news is improvised on stage to exploit all its variants and possibilities.

f) Historical: data or scenes showing the same event in other historical moments, in other countries, or in other social systems, are added to the news.

g) Concretion of the abstract: that which the news often hides is made concrete on the stage: torture, hunger, unemployment, etc.

As we are able to see, these techniques were implemented in the classroom and, by having different articles throwing light on the same incident, we were able to find out what was obscure, hidden, unclear, the incompleteness of the news. We look at the pictures in the newspapers and used what the students had learned from other media, in this case television, about what happened. We complemented the information with other visual images.

We extrapolated our experience to make sense of the news. We tried to make sense of what happened through language. As stated in the story, students tried to speak; they sometimes spoke at the same time; they gave their own opinions. Using Arendt's concepts, people came together risking their disclosure. They dialogued, and true dialogue only takes place when there are equal power relations among those who gather to speak.[8] Dialogue was used as a means to transform social relations in the classroom and to raise awareness about relations in society at large.[9]

Before the end of the class they were invited to write their own opinions. It is important to speak the collective voice, but the voice can only be reached if we keep the individual distinctiveness of the participants.[10] Through this project the students were able to write their distinctiveness and through the word explain their perception of the world.

The following day we engaged in a debate. My intentions were to allow for a space in which students, by placing themselves as actors in the situation of those who were killed, those who were killers, and those who were spectators, could begin to change the reality. I wanted them to experiment with change, and to convert from passive recipients of the news to active researchers of the news. To change their bodies from the bodies of those who read the news to those that, by researching the biases of the news, question it, disclose it, write it, or re-write it. Through the debate the students engaged in the research, they argued, they reflected in what could have happened, they got emotional about it. By the end they named the oppressor and the oppressed, took away from the press the reason they had given for the killings, reappropriated the reasons, and named others less likely to present the news as incomplete. As Kidd has stated, they used the debate as a type of popular theater in which "they increased consciousness and through collective analysis they challenged oppression, they used it as a tool to voice their concerns, to appeal to their sense of justice."[11,12] They decided that, regardless of whether the peasants were guerrillas or not, and most of them thought they were not, the army had no right over their lives.

This was a class full of "naming," which, as defined by Fine, refers to "the identification of the social and economic relationships that most clearly affect students' lives, such as the inequitable distribution of power and resources."[13] Therefore, in this particular class naming refers to the voicing of the multiple factors that affect students' lives, such as eviction, unjustice, oppression. They discussed the ideology of the news and clarified its camouflaged message.

After the debate ended, they named their reading process.

In the fourth class, we read another newspaper article brought by one of the students. This article organizes the students to go further into the discussion of the issue does the army have the right to kill the peasants if they are guerrillas. The multiplicity of voices emerges, and even when all of the students agreed that the army had no right to kill the peasants, a student has a different opinion. It is in the multiplicity of opinions that a dialogue is formed.[14]

Lets examine this student's opinion and later the opinion of another student that disagrees.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Luz: Mi opinión es, a mi no me gustaría que maten a nadie, comprende?, eh, pero los soldados, el ejercito es el que tiene que poner la paz, tiene que acabar con los guerrilleros para traer la paz, porque mientras haya guerrilleros va a haber guerra, pero no es justo que los maten, deben encarcelarlos pero no matarlos, pero tienen que poner paz.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Luz: This is my opinion, I would not like for anyone to get killed, understand?, eh, but the soldiers, the army is the one to bring peace, because while there are guerrilla fighters there will be war, but it is not fair that they get killed, they should incarcerate them but they should not kill them, but they [the soldiers] have to establish peace.

One might say that this student has internalized oppression and believes that the army has the right to impose their conception of peace, regardless of how removed they may be from the people. In other words, peace is the state against killing, regardless of the injustices that it is protecting. Reardon uses the term "negative peace" to define the type of peace that represents the absence of war.[15] The concept of "positive peace", according to Reardon, refers to a set of positive humane conditions that make up a preferred reality in which the causes of war have been overcome.

Another student responds:

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Carlos: Yo tengo la opinión contraria, cuando en un pueblo se lenvanta una guerrilla, es porque es un pueblo que está oprimido. Mayormente la base fundamental es la opresión que hay en ese pueblo, por esa razón se levanta en una guerrilla, allí, [en El Salvador] o en cualquier otro país, esa es la base, la opresión que hay, el hambre, y todo lo que existe y entonces se levanta una guerrilla, para poder liberar a ese pais.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Carlos: I have the opposite opinion, when people rise in a guerrilla movement is because those people are oppressed. The fundamental reason is the oppression that exist in those people, that is the reason for them to get in a guerrilla movement. There [in El Salvador] or in any other country. The oppression that exist is the reason, the hunger and everything else, consequently they rise in a guerrilla movement, to be able to liberate their country.

I can only say that, in this vignette, we can point to the force of dialogue to name life. The power of the voice of the people that is shaped by their personal histories. Carlos, the man in the last exchange, has been in prison, and prison is what the other student offers as a way to stop the killings. Carlos understands that once the oppressive conditions are so dehumanizing, people have to liberate themselves, and that it is in collectivism that the power lies. But it is only in the context of the two exchanges that we can give meaning to the history of Latin America: Oppression, hunger, and subordination by the military portraying themselves as responsible for law and order. Furthermore, meaning is given to the organization of people in a guerrilla movement to liberate their country. It is in the understanding of how these two exchanges take place that we can understand the articles we read and the totality of the oppression.

Besides reading this newspaper article and having the rich dialogue about oppression and about the "right" of some people to kill others, we also read an excerpt from Eduardo Galeano's *Memoria del Fuego III. El Siglo del Viento*. The excerpt (Appendix 6) entitled "The exercise of the right to vote and its distressing consequences" is about an election of representatives to the Congress and mayors which was won by the communist party in El Salvador in 1932. The then president General Maximiliano Martinez does not accept the results of the elections. The peasants assault the army headquarters in many cities and hold them for three days. Thirty thousand peasants are killed. Children are also killed because they are "communist." Among the ones that are incarcerated is Farabundo Marti and other leaders of the communist party. The discussion of this article is voluminous. Students engage in a discussion of how we can see in history a pattern of oppression where the peasants are always the oppressed.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT:

Silvia: Bueno estan luchando, o sea, los oprimidos
Martha: los campesinos
Silvia continua: los campesinos que vienen siendo los
oprimidos, en contra del poder del gobierno,
porque no está right lo que están haciendo ellos.
O sea la historia se repite en diferentes ángulos,
pero vienen siendo, si vamos a poner una cosa a la
otra, viene siendo lo mismo. Siempre luchando por
la verdad
Irma: los comunistas están luchando
Varios estudiantes al mismo tiempo: por la justicia
Silvia: por lo justo, por lo que les toca.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Silvia: Well the ones who are struggling are the oppressed
Martha: The peasants
Silvia continues: the peasants that are the oppressed against the power of the government, because it is not right what they are doing to them. So history repeats in different angles, but it is the same, if we see one thing and another. Struggling always for the truth
Irma: The communist are fighting
Several students at the same time: for justice
Silvia: for what is just, for what belongs to them.

They are able to use the context of history to identify who has been and still is the oppressed and who is the oppressor and how the oppressed has to struggle always for the truth, for justice, for what belongs to them. The students' knowledge and experiences with oppression have been made meaningful in the context of this article and, therefore, according to Giroux, could be made critical.[16] The inequalities of power and the injustices have been disclosed. A student mentions how the government wanted people to do what they ordered regardless of how unjust, because it was a dictatorship, and when the peasants struggle for justice, they are killed. They struggle for what is just, and therefore, they are killed. The same person identifies the poor as the oppressed in every place. It seems that the students clearly see the need for changes in the social and economic systems as a precondition for authentic peace.[17] The students humanized the people who were killed by reappropriating them with the power to act and change oppressive conditions.

Reading for Analysis

Reading the Word and the World

I want to show the reader how through this process the students developed a new type of relationship to reading. This relationship is not only based on their relationship to the word through their understanding of the world, but it seems to be based also on the understanding of the social, economical and political factors that affect the world. Furthermore, this new relationship to the printed word involves what students, as shown in vignettes in the following pages, call "reading for analysis" in the process of naming and transforming the world. This new relationship to reading takes place because the students are involved in reading the word and the world in their native language, the language in which their world is conceived. The reading process takes them from the reading of the word, to the reading of the world, to transforming the world. It continues with the re-positioning of this world for further "reading and analysis," to re-create it, and re-write it. Let me show you inside how this process takes place.

Following a debate, the students are asked what they had learned from the different newspaper readings and the debate. The following exchange takes place:

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT:

Klaudia: OK, vamos a ver, ok vamos a ver, éste ¿qué es lo
que nosotros hemos sacado
[dirigiendose a alguien que está riendose]

Klaudia continua: perdoname, ¿qué es lo que hemos sacado de éste ejercicio en terminos de lectura?, ¿qué es lo que esto nos dice?
Maria: Bueno, al sacar la la verdad, de
Mario: sacar la verdad
Maria continua: de los hechos,
Klaudia: ajá
Maria continua:de lo que ocurrió en ese pais,
Klaudia: ajá
Maria: y las versiones que dieron distintos grupos
Silvia: distintos, exacto
Klaudia: ok, vemos que cada grupo tiene una versión
Varios estudiantes contestan a la misma vez: diferente
diferente
Klaudia: Vemos que para realmente entender un artículo del periódico, que, ¿que necesitamos?
Mario: Comprensión
Klaudia: Comprensión de lectura, pero que más
Maria: Entenderlo
Otro participante: Leerlo
Alice: Entendiendo
Tres personas al unísono: Entenderlo
Mary: entenderlo
Klaudia: entenderlo. Nos vasta con un articulo
Silvia: Conclusiones
Mario: y analizarlo
Klaudia: y analizarlo
Silvia: conclusiones y analizarlo, porque si vamos a unir porque todas las versiones quedamos en que, ¿quién dijo la verdad?
Klaudia: OK entonces necesitamos leerlo, comprenderlo bien, right? analizarlo dijimos
Maria: discutirlo
Klaudia termina la frase: y sacar conclusiones
Maria: discutirlo para
Klaudia: discutirlo y sacar conclusiones
Klaudia: necesitamos un artículo o necesitamos mas de un artículo para entender los hechos
Varios estudiantes al mismo tiempo: mas de un artículo
Klaudia: necesitamos mas de un artículo,¿porque?
Maria: porque cada dia dicen cosas diferentes, mas versiones diferentes para llegar a la verdad de los hechos
Mary: y matan a mas personas
Klaudia: y matan a mas personas
Maria: y siguen matando mas, y mas, y mas
Klaudia: OK, entonces necesitamos mas de un artículo porque cada dia sale una noticia que nos va a dar una nueva visión
Greta: una nueva visión
Klaudia: correcto, ahora, necesitamos saber mas acerca del Salvador para comprender este acontecimiento o con lo que sabíamos era suficiente

Benito: bueno, porque lo que yo veo aquí no habra conclusión
Mario: Si la hay
Benito continua: por la forma de recurrir y el procedimiento que ellos llevan para que no tiene tampoco fin, porque entonces el proceso habrá que darle un termino, o un tiempo, para ver de que forma
Klaudia: aja! y cómo se llama el termino ese que es lo que pasa entre un acontecimiento y otro, ¿cómo se llama eso?

Esto nos organiza a una discusión de la historia. Discutimos acerca de que estamos haciendo y estudiando la historia de El Salvador y como lo que les esta pasado a ellos nos afecta a nosotros. Nos afecta segun los participantes porque somos humanos, porque ellos son hispanos, porque lo que les esta pasando a ellos nos puede pasar a nosotros.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Klaudia: OK, let's see, OK, let's see, what have we learned [addressing somebody who is laughing]
Klaudia continues: excuse me, what have we learned from this exercise in relationship to reading?, What is it that this tells us?
Maria: well, to get the truth, the
Mario: to get the truth
Maria continues: of the events,
Klaudia: yes
Maria: what occurred in that country
Klaudia: yes
Maria continues: and the versions given by the different groups.
Silvia: different, right
Klaudia: OK, we see that each group has a different version
Many students simultaneously: different
different
Klaudia: We see that to really understand an article from the newspaper, what, What do we need?
Mario: comprehension
Klaudia: reading comprehension, but what else
Maria: to understand it
Another Participant: to read it
Alice: Understanding
Three students at the same time: To understand it
Mary: to understand it
Klaudia: to understand it. Is it enough with one article?
Silvia: conclusions
Mario: and analysis
Klaudia: and to analyze it

Silvia: conclusions and analysis, because if we were going to put together all the different versions, we'll have that, who said the truth?
Klaudia: OK, then we need to read it, to understand it, right? and analyze it, we said
Maria: to discuss it
Klaudia ending her phrase: and to draw conclusions
Maria: to discuss it in order to
Klaudia: to discuss it to draw conclusions
Klaudia: do we need one article or do we need more than one article to understand what happened?
Many students at the same time: more than one article
Klaudia: we need more than one article, why?
Maria: because each day they said different things about what happened, more versions to get to the truth of what took place
Mary: and they killed more people
Klaudia: and they killed more people
Maria: and they continue killing more, and more, and more
Klaudia: OK, then we need more than one article because every day there is a different news which will give us a different view
Greta: a different view
Klaudia: right, now, do we need to know more about El Salvador to understand the events or is it enough with what we already know?
Benito: well, because for what I see here there will be no conclusion
Mario: yes, there will be
Benito continues: because of the way they do it, and the process they follow there will be no end, we will have to give time to the process to see how...
Klaudia: Yes, and how do we call the time which occurs between one event and another?

This questions organizes the class into a discussion of history. We discuss how we are studying the history of El Salvador, how we are making history, and how this event will make the history of El Salvador. We also discuss how the events in El Salvador affect us in the United States. The students say we are affected by this event because we are human beings, because they are Hispanics like us, because what is happening there could happen to us.

As we can see, students placed maximum importance to the analysis and discussion of the articles. The debate allowed people to experiment with the newspaper and to find out that newspapers have different versions according to what is disclosed or not reported. The students learned that more than one source is necessary to analyze what we read. It is interesting to note how there is a synchrony among the participants to complete each other's sentences, to participate, to name, to discuss. They name their reading process as, "To get the truth of the events in that country, of the different versions given by the different groups, to comprehend, to understand, to read it, to analyze it, to draw conclusions". It seems to me that they read the word by reading the world. We can only read the world by analyzing and critically understanding how social reality works. Through what Habermas has called emancipatory knowledge and Giroux dialectic knowledge, the students tried to investigate how social relations are distorted and manipulated by relations of power and privilege.[18] They tried to investigate how, through the use of military power, the army and the government of El Salvador manipulated the truth and distorted the information in order to keep the power and the existent unfair relations of inequality. As Giroux and Liston recommend, the students were allowed to question the ideological discourse given to justify killings - the unexcusable -.[19,20]

The students define reading much more than decoding, they define reading as something that only takes place through analysis. Their experience with reading has taken a new dimension which is defined as critical: Reading to critically analyze relations of power. "They are reading from the word to analyze the world."

The different readings and the debate allowed them to see how history is written and how it can be written in different ways, sometimes very far from something that even resembles the truth. Giroux has stated that one of the purposes of emancipatory education is to allow the students to check history as they have been told against what they have lived.[21] I think that these students were allowed to do just that.

In addition to reading the newspaper articles, the students also read an excerpt from Memoria del Fuego III. El Siglo del Viento by Eduardo Galeano.[22] As we discussed on page 117 of this chapter, this excerpt dealt with another incident in El Salvador that took place more than fifty years ago. This reading provided the students with a historical context for the event they were studying. The incident was not an isolated event and could only be understood if framed within a historical context. They had the opportunity to experience the type of literacy that, according to Gramsci, is linked to configurations of knowledge, power, and political and cultural struggle.[23]

In the sixth class session, a new type of reading was brought to the students. As described in the story, during this session a piece from The Little Prince in Spanish and "Les voy a Gritar" (English translation: "I will Shout at You") from El Titiritero (English translation: The

Puppeteer) were read.[24] We discovered that a new type of reading is disclosed through the theater. The latter reading has a significant amount of dialogue, and can be considered a piece of Latin American political theater. The process followed is characterized by individual silent reading, then by students reading out-loud, discussion, and analysis. This reading differs from the readings we had done before in that in this one we included more intonation, we played roles, we made noises, and we provided visual effects. As the readings of these pieces was taking place, students were also reading the script they were developing. The development of this script is further described in the section of this chapter titled "Theater as a Rehearsal for Social Change." The reading helped to support the process of creating this original script. In other words, the students created their own theater script while reading others that, in their content, also show people in struggle. Thus, they were allowed to draw upon what they were learning to support and apply it to the different readings and the writing of the script. For example, students learned the use of parenthesis to describe a scene without being taught it formally. Rather, through the process of engaging in the readings, and by reading information given in parenthesis, the students re-applied this to their own script. They referred to their experience to extend their knowledge.[25]

During the reading of The Puppeteer, the students played the roles of the different characters while others made the background noise narrated in the piece. They gave intonation and life to the characters and let their imagination go by making the background noises indicated in the piece and creating others. Light and darkness were improvised by letting the lights in the classroom go on and off. The involvement was so high and so many students participated at the same time that the camera was not able to keep up with the noise level and the sound fluctuations. We read it three times, and at the end of the second time the students applauded themselves, and asked for more readings that would allow them this type of experience.

As I mentioned before and as the reader can gather from the story, the students had been developing their own theater script. The reading of their own script while they were developing it provided them with the material through which to read and change the world.[26] By reading the script, which was their printed representation of their world, they were able to read their own printed word. Instead of reading the world as presented in the newspaper articles or in other readings, they were reading a transformed world that they had created by pouring in it their voices and lived experiences.

Theater as a Rehearsal for Social Change

In the following or fifth class we began the development of a theater script. What they had read, discussed, analyzed, and named in the previous classes was to be re-written starting in this class. Boal has stated that through popular theater the people are able to act for themselves, assume the protagonist role, change the dramatic action, try out solutions, and discuss plans for change. He has further stated that discussion and analysis are important elements of this process and that even though the theater is not change in itself, it is certainly rehearsal for change.[27] Freire has stated that in problem-posing education the teacher is not merely the one who teaches but also the one that learns with the students.[28] He also believes that problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality and that, through problem-posing education people, develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world. They develop the power to see the world, not as a static reality, but a reality in the process of transformation. During the development of the three scenes that formed the script, problem-posing education and popular theater come together, and in this relationship, they support the students in their power to develop themselves as writers and therefore authors of reality. Problem-posing education and theater support the students in the process of looking at the world in a critical way and, through dialoguing with each other, become actors of its transformation. The three scenes developed brought up different issues that I will share separately with the reader, but they are also part of a whole which is the process through which they were developed. It is in this process that problem-posing education and the techniques of popular theater come together.

In general, the process we followed was the following: We drew from what we had read, discussed, and analyzed during previous classes. We would select an event presented in an article, or one that was not presented in the articles but the group believed should be discussed. Once the incident was chosen, we problematized it. What happened? How could that happened? How can we communicate it to others? We then discussed the message of what was to be communicated and talked about different ways of presenting it. Boal has suggested both of these techniques in what he has called "newspaper theater."

In order to decide how the event was going to be communicated, it had to be fully understood by the participants. In many instances, once we had decided on the message we would go back to it and change it. In other words, once the group had arrived at a concensus of what really happened, or had described the incident in a realistic way, this decision would become a problem that had to be presented again, and we would continue the process.

In instances when we could not understand what happened because we were lacking information, we would provide elements to make reality more comprehensible. Sometimes we would act the event to be communicated with our bodies or our voices in order to make it more real.

The writing we did was collective. Students not only decided together what we were going to write, but also how we were going to write it. I would pencil-write on a big piece of paper and students would take turns reading it. To read our words and our re-writing of the event we would take roles. Many times after reading a scene in that way we would change it again. Sometimes we would act, represent something with our bodies or our voices in order to make it more understandable. According to Ven Erven, the collective development of the play is one of the factors that characterizes popular theater.[29] Both teachers were involved in the development of the scenes. Our worlds and experiences were integrated with the students'. No one was teaching anyone else; we all had the same information and we were drawing from our lived experiences together. So, as Boal has stated, we assumed the role of the people involved in what was going on, and by assuming the protagonist role, we changed the action.[30]

We tried out solutions and problematized them, we used discussion and analysis to do it. By changing how the events took place, we applied Freire's notion that the world is an incomplete entity that is in the process of transformation. By changing how things took place, we experienced the making of something. We perceived how, through acting, human beings influence the world in a positive or a negative way. We discovered how the role a person plays in society impacts the way the person acts. At the end of the script, they wrote about a way in which the world could be more equal. They appealed to their sense of justice to describe a more just society. They left the end of the script open for others to discuss, to give it meaning from their own experiences, to transform it, to apply their imagination, to pour themselves into it. By discussing and changing reality as it was presented in the Newspaper, and after hours of discussions about the content and the lack of completeness found in the press, they demystify journalism. We were also empowered with the experience of the dialogue, of hearing each other's voices, of losing our voices in the collective discourse and then of re-capturing them in the collective writing. We all had something to say, to change, to like and dislike.

The first scene allowed them to discuss the creation of a spy. A person that by identifying with the oppressed would give them information. He asked for money and position in exchange for information. Later in another class, they add how the spy is placed in isolation by the same people that he gave the information to. The discussion during the development of the scene and the development of the script was so close to reality, so real, that one of the students, when asked to read the role of the spy, refuses.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Klaudia:	Carlos
Estudiante 1:	el espía
Klaudia:	Carlos
Estudiante 2:	Carlos
Estudiante 3:	Carlos

Estudiante 4: vamos Carlos
Carlos: tu eres el que quiere hacer del espía [al estudiante 4]
[risas]
Estudiante 4: ¿quién? ¿Yo?
Klaudia: ¿no vas a contestar? [a Carlos]
Freddy: que él no, que él no hace el papel de espía
Klaudia: ah, ok, este, a ti te gustaria hacer del espia [al estudiante 4]
[estudiante 4 principia a leer]

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Klaudia: Carlos
Student 1: The spy
Klaudia: Carlos
Student 2: Carlos
Student 3: Carlos
Student 4: Let's go Carlos
Carlos: You are the one who wants to be the spy [to student 4]
[Students laugh]
Student 4: Who? me?
Klaudia: You aren't going to answer? [to Carlos]
Freddy That he doesn't do the role of the spy
Klaudia ah, ok, then, would you like to be the spy? [to student 4]
[student 4 begins to read.]

Because classes and/or events cannot be explained in isolation, it is until the final class that this student gives us the information about this event. In order for the reader to go inside the moment described above, I am including the exchange that took place during the final class. This exchange takes place when we were reflecting on the process.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Klaudia: Es muy bonito el que cada persona trae su experiencia, Carlos trajo su experiencia, eh, otra persona, eh, las personas Dominicanas trajeron su experiencia, las personas Puertorriqueñas trajeron su experiencia, ¿no? de como nosotros percibimos estos actos, -y eso es muy bonito, porque es la experiencia de todos nosotros

Carlos: yo quisiera decir algo, verdad, ...el dia ese, en que, se estaba desarrollando la, la escena aqui, pues... yo vivi algo [no se entiende] en mi vida, entiende?, entonces, la razon, de que alguien por aca dijo, -habla, este, -vas a ser el espia, entonces, yo, no quise, porque yo estaba todo nervioso,
Klaudia: si
Carlos: porque yo vivi en un momento asi, una vez, en una prision, taba nervioso, entonces pense en darle una disculpa pues, porque cuando dije -no voy a hablar mas, -voy a quedarme callao, y yo me recuerdo ahora que, -yo me pongo todo nervioso cuando pienso, en eso, eso paso en mi vida, y estoy buscando un final, y fu grande, y..., este...

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Klaudia: It is very nice how each person brings his own experience, Carlos brought his experience, eh, another person, eh, the Dominican people brought their experience, the Puerto Rican people brought their experience, no? of how we perceive these events [acts], -and that is very nice, because it is the experience of all of us.
Carlos: I would like to say something, right, ...that day, in which, the, the scene was being developed here, ah ... I lived [unintelligable] in my life, understand?, then, the reason, that somebody around here said, -talk, ah, -you will be the spy, then, I, I didn't want to, because I was very anxious,
Klaudia: yes,
Carlos: Because I lived a moment like that, once, in a prison, I was anxious, then I thought in giving my apologies since, because, when I said, -I will talk no more, -I will remain quiet, and I was reminded now that, -I become very anxious when I think about that, what happened in my life, and I am looking for its end, and it was big, and..., ah...

As stated by Freire and other critical theorists, language carries history. It plays an important role in the creation of reality, and it is because of this that Carlos was able to pour his experience into the first scene.[31] He was the one that provided the necessity of a spy, because of his experiences. Furthermore, the process allowed him to talk about his experiences, to name his feelings and how he is looking to resolved them. He was able to tell his own story. That is why this script can only be fully understood in the universe of shared meanings.

During the following session, we developed the second scene of the script. We began by reading the first scene. The second scene was developed in a similar way to the first one. We acted different alternatives and finally decided for one. During this scene, we described the most terrible part of the incident, the killings of the ten peasants. These two scenes were typed and distributed to the students during the following class. During the eighth class the third scene was developed. They began the development of this third and last scene by reading the previous two and making changes, they included in the first scene the part about the spy left incommunicated. In the second scene, they identified the captain as the one giving the orders. This organizes the students to have a discussion and to analyze who is the one responsible for the killings and who are those who follow orders. They said that it was not even the captain the one responsible but those who are on top, including the government of another country which is giving military aid to the government of El Salvador and therefore is responsible for the killings. They did an analysis of how things get organize and named the poor as the one who always gets killed. They said that the ones who died are those who let themselves be controlled by the "big" ones, and those who died are the peasants, the poor. They said that not even the people giving the orders are the ones responsible since they are also victims of the oppression suffered by the country. "The big fish eats the small fish," a student concluded. The language that emerged during this part of the discussion reminds me of Freire's definition of dialogue as a process in which learners, by reflecting upon their oppression, are empowered to act.

The dialogue, reflection, and action are all part of the process of liberation.[32] Certainly these learners were empowered to even identify the soldiers as an oppressed class. They were able to identify the oppressors as the ones that eat the small fish. Freire's notion of dialogue as "an encounter between men [and women] mediated by the word, in order to name the world," was evident to me in this moment.[33]

The third scene followed in its development a very similar process as the one outlined above. The language described on page 91 and 92 of the story shows how they go beyond the borders of El Salvador to name the haves and have nots. There are too many people starving to death while others have millions, they concluded. They reached towards the possibilities for a more just society, a society in which people could participate more. They wanted people to have the means of production so that they could help themselves through their work. They did not want people to be helped by giving them something, they wanted people to regain the dignity of having land to harvest and seeds to plant, they wanted people to have hospitals and schools, education based on respect, and respect based on equality. They wanted the government to respect private property so that they could not steal what the people had harvested. And of course, they wanted respect for human rights. They showed a form of knowledge aimed at a critical understanding of how social reality works, and how the logic of domination can be changed. By giving the peasants the land they were changing the economic inequalities that keep an oppressive system in operation, and therefore could end the domination. It is interesting that they make a point of education based on respect, because respect, in addition to being based on equality, is a human condition. This scene opens new possibilities of a better world, a world in which people can have land, food, health services, education based on respect, church, dignity and protection from the government. A world in which people can have equality and social justice.

They wanted to present the scene with a brief introduction about the reasons they had found were behind these events, i.e., inequalities and a lack of social justice. They also wanted the play to be open to an audience for discussion through dialogue. They had internalized dialogue as reaching out and humanizing.

It seems to me that this group of students was able to identify the necessary elements for the establishment of "positive peace." Furthermore they were using thier capacity to think and to care for people whom they did not know directly. What Reardon calls "commitment"- to think of people whom we do not know directly" -from other countries, from other parts of the world, from other times.[34]

Finally, they also wanted to leave the script open-ended so that a new audience could open it for discussion and dialogue. They had internalized, it seems to me, dialogue as reaching out and humanizing. Furthermore, they had understood the unfinished character or reality and by leaving the script unfinished they were, in which Ven Erven found as one of the characteristics of popular theater, allowing others to updated it.[35]

Before I finish my interpretations of the role of the theater script, I want to share with you the different titles a student wrote as alternatives to the naming of the script. I want to share them because in many ways they not only describe the play but also the process I tried to outline above. The title the students chose for the script, "Struggle for Justice," was not among those shared by this particular student. I transcribed the page exactly as she wrote it. (See Appendix 5.)

> "The Revolution"
> It seems to me that this could be the title because there are a lot of people who are implicated.
> It could also be called The War because the army is involved.

Or it could be Theme among all.
"Struggle for Power"
Threaten to death by the Government"
"Essay among all"
Difference among all.

Reflecting on Resistance

The last class offers the opportunity for students to talk about the time, during the sixth class, when they did not want to continue with the development of the script. I organized the discussion by asking:

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Klaudia: Yo se que a veces el tema, sobre todo cuando discutimos la segunda escena, porque es tan fuerte.... ustedes yo les quiero preguntar,¿no querían seguir con eso por el tema, o por el teatro?
Silvia: yo creo que's por el tema, por el tema, por lo que se ve, lo que estamos mirando el la televisión. Personalmente yo soy bien emocional.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Klaudia: I know that sometimes the topic, especially when we were discussing the second scene, because it's so strong...you I want to ask, you didn't want to continue, was it because of the topic, or because of the theater?
Silvia: I believe that because of the topic, because of the topic, what we see, what we were watching on television. Personally I'm very emotional.

I want to remind the reader that, when Silvia brought this up during the sixth class, the reason she gave for refusing to continue was that we had been doing the same thing for too many days, and that people went home thinking about it. At the time, I thought that perhaps the reason was that we had disturbed the relationship between the theater and the grammar during that particular day. We had done theater but we had not worked on grammar. It was also the first time we had acted something, in that case, the killing of the peasants.

During the ninth class, Silvia lets us know that she had not wanted to continue with the theater work in the sixth class because of the topic. Silvia was the only student to speak up on the two occasions. If in fact Silvia was the only one who did not wish to continue, on both occasions she was unable to organize other students to support her. She did, however, organize the teachers, not only to type the draft of the script, but to begin the following class (class # 7) with grammar.

Later in the ninth class there is another moment when Silvia refers to the topic of the unit.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Freddy: Cuando ustedes dicen que se pusieron nerviosos, y han pasado por éste proceso,¿ustedes piensan ahora que fue algo eso fue algo positivo?¿fue bueno lo que hicimos o fue negativo? pensando en que uno se pone nervioso, asi, hubiese sido mejor no hacer ésto,¿o fue bueno hacerlo?
Laura: que fue bueno
Maria: fue bueno
Varios estudiantes al mismo tiempo: bueno, fue bueno, fue bueno hacerlo, si
Freddy: incluso aunque que te desvelastes aquella noche [refiriendose a Laura]
Laura: aja, pero me gustó, me dió los conocimientos que habia..
Freddy: que fue bueno porque aprendistes algo,¿tu dices?
Laura: si
Silvia: yo opino que aunque hubiera sido de otro tema, pues tambien hubieramos aprendido a leer, y hubieramos aprendido, que se aclareciera la luz, pero ya que se hizo de ese tema pues...

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Freddy: When you say that you got nervous, and now that you've gone through the process, do you think that it was good? that it was something positive?, was it good what we did or was it negative? thinking that one gets nervous, so, would it had been better no to do it, or was it good to do it?
Laura: It was good
Maria: was good
Many students at the same time: it was good, good, it was good to do it
Freddy: even when it kept you up one night [to Laura]?
Laura: yea, but I liked doing it, it gave me the knowledge that ..
Freddy: that it was good because you learned something, you said?
Laura: yes
Silvia: my opinion is that even when it was about another topic.. ah, we would have learned to read, and we would have learned to clarify the truth, but since it was done on that topic, well....

Silvia not only takes responsibility for the fact that she is the only student voicing disagreement, but states for the second time she did not like the topic, even though she liked the process. I think but cannot prove, that perhaps Silvia was questioning, in Giroux's terms, the ideological discourse presented in the materials.[36] This is one of the elements Giroux advises should be present for critical literacy to occur. Maybe Silvia was talking about her way to resist. The class allowed her to speak her "voice" and to be heard. According to Giroux, students are able to speak their voices in dialogue when there are equal relationships of power among those who gather to speak.[37] The student that "spoke for the class" during the sixth class, explains her thought during the ninth class and "speaks for herself".

Reflecting on the Process

In the Process of Becoming

The last class also provided the space for participants to talk and reflect on what had happened during the eight previous classes. It gave them the opportunity to name themselves in different ways, as authors, writers and actors of their own becoming. For the naming, they used words in a provocative way to describe their world, words that they had not used before during the previous classes. While the final, typed copy of the script is being distributed, Laura goes through it and says:

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Laura: Carlos, mira,
[moviendose hacia donde Carlos quien está sentado
enfrente de ella. Ella mueve una mano mientras con
la otra sostiene el guión teatral]
Laura: Carlos, Carlos
[Carlos mira hacia donde Laura esta sentada, mueve
la parte superior de su cuerpo hacia el frente.
Laura enseñandole con el dedo la página donde la
lista de los nombres de los participantes aparece
bajo el titulo the escritores]
Laura: MIRA, LOS ESCRITORES!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Laura: Carlos, look,
[waving towards Carlos, who is seating on a table
facing hers. She is waving one hand while with the
other she is holding the script]
Laura: Carlos, Carlos
[Carlos looks towards her, moves the upper part of
his body forward. Laura pointing to the page of
the script where the list of participants appears
under the heading "writers"]
Laura: LOOK, THE WRITERS!

Laura names herself a writer and shares her new concept with another student. As Greene has stated, referring to becoming authors of one's world, "The consciousness of authorship has much to do with the consciousness of freedom."[38]

The students also talk about reading their own words in the script:

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Mario: que tiene, que tiene frases, que son digamos, mas comunes, para nosotros entendarlas, porque muchas oraciones, por ejemplo, la oración son de nuestra propia capacidad. Y las que leimos alli, [refiriendose al periódico] pues es de la capacidad de otro.
Freddy: tu hablas del articulo que leimos al principio
Mario: ajá, al principio
Klaudia: es decir que se hace una diferencia en leer algo que otra persona ha escrito o leer lo que nosotros hemos escrito
Mario: si
Klaudia: se hace más facil porque son nuestras palabras
Mario: son las palabras nuestras
Klaudia: correcto

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Mario: That it has phrases, that we could say are more common to us, to understand them, because many sentences for example, are of our own capacity. And the ones that we read there [referring to the newspaper] are of the capacity of others.
Freddy: you are talking about the articles that we read at the beginning
Mario: yes, at the beginning
Klaudia: In other words, that it makes a difference to read something that someone else wrote and something that we have written ourselves
Mario: yes
Klaudia: it is easier because they are our words
Mario: They are our words
Klaudia: right

We see validated what Freire has stated so many times, not only that students should read the word and the world, but that the words should come from the cultural universe of the people.[39] By using the students' words, educators make a statement about the political dimension of literacy. The students' words carry their voices, their voices construct their language, and their language speaks of their reality. The students' voices are unique, and by allowing them to emerge we engage ourselves in a political project in which students are empowered to affirm their class, racial and gender identities.

The exchange with this student continues when Laura, the woman who named herself writer, adds:

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Laura: Yo creo que nos da mucha emoción el que...
Freddy: que?
Laura: nos da mucha emoción verlo asi, [mostrando el guión], a él más, [refiriendose a Mario], porque lo veo nervioso
Freddy: pero tu estornudastes
Klaudia: tu nos dijistes que habías estornudado de los nervios
Laura: si, a mi me dio estornudo
Klaudia: ajá
Freddy: ella dice que [referring to Carla]
Carla: nos da mas motivación de leer, esa es la palabra
Klaudia: y motivación
Freddy: tu dices que
Laura: tambien de ver el nombre de los autores
Freddy: que cambio de nombre? bueno porque
Laura: NO, el nombre de los autores
Klaudia: el nombre de, ¿cómo?
Laura: ver el nombre de los autores [enseñando el guión]
Klaudia: ah!... el ver el nombre tuyo como escritora
Laura: si

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Laura: I believe that it gives us a lot of emotion to...
Freddy: What?
Laura: It gives us a lot of emotion to see it like this [holding up the script], even more to him [referring to Mario], because I see that he is nervous
Freddy: but you sneezed
Klaudia: you told us that you sneezed because you felt emotional
Laura: yes, it showed by sneezing
Klaudia: yes
Freddy: she says that
Carla: It gives us more motivation to read. That is the word
Klaudia: and motivation
Freddy: you say that
Laura: also, to see the name of the authors
Freddy: That it changed names? well, because
Laura: NO, the name of the authors [showing script]
Klaudia: Ah!... to see your name as one of the writers
Laura: yes!

Laura had shared with us not only what she felt when reading her own words and her own changed view of the world, but the fact that it makes her feel emotional. Carla, another student, says that the script gives her more motivation to read. Furthermore, Laura has given herself another name, first she calls herself a writer and then she calls herself an author. The script belongs to her!

This class also provides Carlos with the opportunity to reflect upon the creation of the spy in the script and to share with us the reasons why he did not want to read the part of the spy a few classes before. Furthermore, Carlos shares with us how he interprets the process of reading.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Carlos: En el caso, en caso yo lo encontré, al principio no, no le puse tanta, vamos a decir, tanta importancia, porque, como se dice, leerlo... yo a veces que como leo, yo no entiendo lo que se esta leyendo, pero después, al final pues, vi que tenía mucha importancia y yo llege a la conclusion de que se tratara de analizar

Freddy: pero fijate que tu estabas participando mucho casi desde el principio

Carlos: si

Freddy: que tu dices ahora que querías mas análisis pero tu eras una de las gentes que estaba analizando por qué estaba pasado eso

Carlos: si porque en casa de noche, yo cogia los artículos, me ponía a estudiarlos, los estudiaba mucho, pensando que la razon...

Freddy: asi es que tu, saliendo de aqui, seguias trabajando con esto

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Carlos: In my case, in this case, at the beginning didn't, I didn't give it so much, let's say, so much importance, because,, how can I say it, reading...sometimes I read, and I do not understand what I read, but later at the end, I realized it had a lot of importance and I reached the conclusion that we should try to analyze it.

Freddy: but look, you were participating almost from the beginning

Carlos: yes

Freddy: but you are now saying that you wanted more analysis, but you were one of the people who was analyzing more what was happening

Carlos: yes, because at home at night, I would take the articles, and I would study them, I studied them a lot, thinking about the reason...

Freddy: so, that after you left from here you would continue working with it

In a way, Carlos is telling us that it was not until he realized that we were reading for analysis that he gave importance to the "act of reading." He also lets us know how he begins to take readings home when he decides that he was going to read it for analysis and therefore, for understanding. He is empowered to read the word in and out of school.

When the teacher compares the way they read the completed script out loud to the way they had read the piece from "The Puppeteer", a student shares what she felt and in a way disagrees with the perceptions of the teacher.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPT

Freddy: Cuando leyeron el "Wachiman", [The Puppeteer], recuerdan?, que lo leímos tres veces, ustedes no era actuándolo pero cuando lo leyeron la segunda vez y hasta la tercera vez, le dieron mucha más emoción en la forma que lo leyeron y cuando leen ésto no le dan la menor emoción [señalando la copia del guión]
Ana: cuando leer ¿qué?
Freddy: cuando leen ésto [moviendo el guión]
Ana: esto ¿qué?
Freddy: ésto, éste
Ana: que no le damos
Freddy: yo creo que lo leyeron más como, era más como
Ana: si pero, hubo un tiempo mientras estaban dramatizando eso, yo me quede callada, escuchandolo, uno se emociona, y uno cree que estaban recitandolo, y en realidad las mismas personas que estaban, tu sabes, yo estaba bien emocionada
Freddy: tu leistes Ana
Ana: si
Freddy: tu leistes
Ana: si, y yo los escuchaba, y los escuchaba y en realidad lo leian como si fueran las mismas personas

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Freddy: When you read the "Wachiman," [The Puppeteer], remember?, that we read it three times, you were not acting it, but when you read it the second time and even the third time you gave it a lot of emotion, in the way you read it, and when you read this, you don't give it a bit of emotion [Pointing to his copy of the script]
Ana: When you read what?
Freddy: When you read this [waving the script]
Ana: This what?
Freddy: This, this,
Ana: that we didn't give it
Freddy: I think that you read it more like

Ana: yes, but once, while they were dramatizing it, I kept quiet, listening, one gets emotional, and one believes that they were reciting, and that it is real, that they, [referring to the other students in the class] were the same people that were there. I was very moved
Freddy: did you read...?
Ana: yes
Freddy: you read?
Ana: yes, and I was listening to them [the other students] and listening to them, and in reality they read it as if they were the people who this happened to.

In this exchange, Ana expresses how she felt about the script and how it belonged to the class. Finally, this class provided the space for people to talk about their past lives in Puerto Rico. They talked about the way they grew up. They talked about how people were so poor that the rich could buy people to vote for their own candidate. They talked about growing up in the countryside and how they learned to work since they were children. They were showing a new way of literacy, a literacy that, according to Gramsci, allows people to become self-critical about the historical constructed nature of one's own experience.[40]

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV

[1] Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, Education Under Siege, (South Hadley, MA.: Bergin & Garvey, 1985), p. 7.

[2] Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, "Teacher Education and the Politics of Engagement: The Case for Democratic Schooling", Harvard Educational Review, August, 1986, p. 230.

[3] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (New York: Continuum, 1987), p. 27.

[4] Ibid., p.28.

5 Ibid.

[6] David G. Gueulette, "The Pedagogy of Communication: Conscientization through Mass Media," Media and Adult Learning, 1981, p. 31.

[7] Augusto Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed, (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985), p. 143.

[8] Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 175.

[9] Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, "What is the 'Dialogical Method' of Teaching?", Journal of Education, Fall 1987, pp. 11-31.

[10] Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 77.

[11] Ross Kidd, "Popular Theater, Conscientization, and Popular Organization," Reading and Helping Unorganized and Disadvantaged People, (Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, 1985), p. 21.

[12] Ross Kidd and Martin Byram, "Popular Theatre: A Technique for Participatory Research," Participatory Research Project, Working Paper No. 5, (Toronto, Canada: International Council for Adult Education, 1979).

[13] Michelle Fine, "Silencing in Public Schools," Language Arts, February, 1987, p.160.

[14] Giroux and McLaren.

[15] Betty Reardon, Militarization, Security, and Peace Education, (Valley Forge, PA.: United Ministries of Education, 1982), p. 14.

[16] Giroux and McLaren, p. 220

[17] Reardon, Militarization, Security, and Peace Education, p. 59.

[18] Peter McLaren, Life in Schools, (New York: Longman, 1989), p. 170.

[19] Giroux and McLaren, p. 223.

[20] Daniel P. Liston and Denneth M. Zeichner, "Critical Pedagogy and Teacher Education," Journal of Education, Fall 1987, pp. 117-137.

[21] Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, Literacy: Reading the Word and the World, (South Hadley, MA.: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1987), p. 35.

[22] Eduardo Galeano, Memoria del Fuego III. El Siglo del Viento. p. 110.

[23] James Donald, "Language, Literacy, and Schooling," The State and Popular Culture, (Milton Keynes: Open University, U 203 Popular Culture Unit, 1982), p. 44.

[24] Gustavo Alvarez Gardeazabal, El Titiritero, (Plaza Y Janes: Editores-Colombia Ltda., 1979), pp. 157-158.

[25] Giroux and McLaren, p. 22[illegible].

[26] Freire and Macedo, p. 35.

[27] Boal, p. 122.

[28] Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 67.

[29] Eugene Van Erven, Radical People's Theatre, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 173-180.

[30] Boal, p. 122.

[31] Freire and Macedo, p. 133.

[32] Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 36.

[33] Freire and Macedo, p. 35.

[34] Betty Reardon, Comprehensive Peace Education, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987), p. 78.

[35] Van Erven, p. 173.

[36] Giroux and McLaren, p. 221.

[37] Ibid., p. 230.

[38] Maxine Greene, The Dialectic of Freedom, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988), p. 22.

[39] Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 36.

[40] Donald, p. 44.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

I began this dissertation by describing in the Introduction the context in which the study took place. In Chapter I, I discussed why I believe it is important to understand the context that teachers and students bring to the learning situation, the role that education plays in society, and how we can challenge that role and impact on the elements that organize society in order to transform it.

Through this dissertation, I attempted to re-organize the students in a "literacy class", to give space to a different type of pedagogy. A pedagogy that, by posing questions, intends to challenge the conditions under which oppression is concealed. I wanted to experiment with a pedagogy that allows the participants to examine critically how written information can be manipulated and organized for confusion and concealment. The type of pedagogy that, through the use of theater, allows people to create the space through which they can actively participate in the generation of knowledge.

The purpose of this dissertation was not to prove but to show, from a practitioner's point of view, the implementation of critical pedagogy in a literacy class through the use of popular theater. It attempted to show how a group of adult students reorganized themselves, through theater, to provide the space for "literacy" to take place.

I was not concerned with literacy in the way it is usually understood, i.e., defined on the basis of results on tests that measure reading ability. I was concerned with the type of literacy that, in Gramsci's terms, allows the "reading" person to become self critical about the historical constructed nature of his/her own experience. The type of literacy that, according to Freire, allows people to use language for social and political transformation.

Students bring into the classroom a way to name the world and to deal with their oppression. They also bring into the classroom their own ideas about education and their own myths about the organized conditions that have shaped their lives. The role of the critical educator is to organize the classroom for students to share "their language." This language not only speaks about the experiences of their past, but about the way the students name the world and the way they speak of their oppression. During the nine classes of this study, the class was re-organized through theater. Through this organization, the students shared the way they name oppression. The way they speak of the world and of oppression may vary, and in many cases is more accurate than the way "formally educated" people speak of oppression. When talking about the oppressor and its exploitation of the oppressed, students talked about "the big fish eats the small fish". They talked about the way they perceive the world, and they engaged in its collective description. They named the poor and the peasants as the people who always get killed, and they talked about those that Freire would say "had internalized oppression." They talked about the almost non-visible hand that held the money to buy the guns. In their multiplicity of voices, some students talked about what Reardon calls "negative peace", to keep a false peace provided by violence. Referring to the soldiers, a student said "they are not responsible, they follow orders." They also talked about what Reardon calls "positive peace," peace that is only achieve through equality and social justice. In the last scene of the script they named the elements for a better society, a society that by providing land and the means of production to the people, would be more equal and therefore more just.

The students also shared their ideas about education. A male student said: "the educated person always talks for the ones that are not, for the ones who are hungry, the ones that do not know, and then [the educated person] burns them." This was the same student that, during the first class, shared how he had been evicted from his apartment. The evictions are done by the people downtown that hold a job because they have some "education". The people who defend the evicted are those that "speak for him" in hearings and write his complains on paper.

Students shared their past experiences with education through the grammar. When they worked on grammar, they were all quiet, they all copied from the blackboard, they answered, "yes, teacher." Grammar provided the instances during this class when we did something similar to what most other classes do. The teachers also shared during theses moments the way they were probably "educated" when they were students. Through the grammar, students shared phrases that were different from the sentences they had shared during the dialogue. Sentences such as "I bought shoes"; and "I went to my son's house to see a kitty that he brought to his house. I had a good time playing with her." I think that, by providing these sentences, the students shared their perceptions about "formal schooling" as something removed from reality, with content that does not allow them to challenge their own reality.

For critical educators to organize classes into spheres where students can speak "their language", they have to reorganize the relations of power within the classroom and the schools. In the educational exchange, students and teachers have elements of both; teachers are students and students are teachers. After these relationships of power have been re-organized, teachers and students can engage in dialogue in order to analyze reality together. Students can then learn to read the word that will allow them to critically question the oppressive conditions of society and work toward their transformation.

From the first day of class, the teacher allowed for dialogue to take place, for people to talk, for people to disagree. Students engaged in dialogue, and, at times, disagreed with the teachers. Students were not only speaking Spanish as a language that can talk about oppression, but were speaking the language that spoke of their lives. Students used democratic means to decide the issues of the class. Students, by using their lives and their language, tried to make sense of what had happened in a far away, still close, country.

The critical educator concerned with issues of power and equality, is also concerned with the ideological dimension of curriculum materials. Educational materials do not only have to be rooted in the cultural universe of the people, but have to provide for a critical dimension of analysis. Educational materials should extent the possibilities for acting, and deal with the issues that have historically, economically, socially and linguistically impacted on the lives of the people.

The educational materials used in this class talked about a country with a political status that is affecting thousands of people who are coming to this country and living in Hispanic communities. Students, through the use of these materials, engaged in the process of researching the reasons why people immigrate. It is not by chance that we find ourselves here when we all come from different places, and at different times. But there are commonalties, in terms of who is coming and why. Students were allowed to discussed the conditions that oppress people. The conditions of "poverty and lack of social justice." Not much different from the conditions that impacted on their lives back home, that continue impacting on their lives, and that organized their own immigrations. They had the opportunity to see the history of El Salvador, and Salvadorans, not in isolation, but within a context that allows them to talk about the history of other groups and the reasons for others to come. The Salvadorans who are immigrating are the peasants and the poor, who come from communities similar to the communities that the students come from.

The critical educator must allow the multiplicity of experiences and voices to evolve during the discussion. These voices will enrich the curriculum and the dialogue. Furthermore, it is in the collective voice that students show their way of surviving collectively. As Freire has stated, man [and woman} is not created in silence, but in the word. It is through the word of many that we make sense of the word of one. The word of many students forms the context of the discourse. It is through the collective voice that we learn about the multiple ways through which people have resisted. The way they have resisted speak of the way they have survived.

In this project, participants were allowed to experiment with the power of dialogue. Through dialogue, they made sense of the atrocities of the killing. Through means of the word, they could name the world. Through the collective discourse, a possibility was born. A better world in which people have the means to survive. In chapters III and IV, I provided moments that exemplify the ways the students' dialogue was organized. They completed each others sentences, and, on occasions, they talked at the same time. Their dialogue named oppression. It also named the reading process as requiring analysis for comprehension. The students internalized the purpose of a dialogue and included it in the theater script. During the last scene, they left it open for dialogue to take place and for others to pour their experiences and language into the unfinished script.

The critical educator should be engaged in the project of writing peoples' stories. The stories of the people will speak of their "real language." The language that they have used to name the world. By being engaged in this project, students can reach beyond their communities as they read the stories of others facing similar circumstances. This project allowed people to see their stories as part of a much larger entity that organized entire groups, communities and countries for oppression. In this way, the "internalization of individual oppressions" can be evident, and by being evident it can be challenged. Individuals can reach beyond themselves to those that face the same oppression, and they can empower themselves for change. Furthermore, writing the stories of the people allowed them to write their own history. As I stated above, their story is only part of the organized totality of individual stories. By writing them, the students were allowed to write the collective story of the group. The collective story that in Western thought, we call history.

Through this project, students wrote individually and collectively. The script is their collective story and carries the meaning of their multiplicity of voices. There are the voices of Carlos, Laura, Silvia, Alice, Maria, Mario, and others, which carry the history of an event. An event that took place miles away from them, but that can be as close as a recent immigrant, next door neighbor.

In this project, the dialogue, the connection to history, and the shaping and rehearsing of reality, was done through theater. Theater provided a context for people to dialogue, to analyze the written word and to reach their own conclusions. Theater provided the context for people to write their individual and collective stories and to rehearse for change. Through theater, students named the world and participated in the creation of a better world. Theater provided the space for the multiplicity of voices to emerge and for teacher and students to engage in transformation.

Finally, classrooms and education cannot be isolated events in peoples lives. Classrooms and education can be hegemonic or counterhegemonic centers. They have been used by society to carry its traditions. In most cases, these traditions have kept some people rich and powerful, and others disempowered and poor. The counterhegemonic teacher is concerned with placing education and what students do in the classroom within the historical framework of society. The counterhegemonic teacher allows students to analyze the role of education in society and to consciously participate in it's re-making. Ideally, what students do in the classroom should be reflected in action, not only inside the classroom, but in the larger society. This action allows the students to see society as an organized entity in which events take place because people have organize them to take place. Furthermore, students must be allowed to counter-organize these events. The reading of the word and the connection to the reading of the world should also be connected to the re-organization of the world, a world in which, hopefully, there will be equality and justice.

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APPENDIX A

FIRST DRAFT OF THEATER SCRIPT

GUIÓN TEATRAL

DESARROLLADO POR LA CLASE DEL NIVEL C

PROGRAMA DE EDUCACIÓN POPULAR DEL BARRIO

NUEVA YORK, OCTUBRE, 1988

I ESCENA

Espía: En la provincia de Oriente hay ocho campesinos que dan información a los guerrilleros.

Soldado: ¿Quiénes son? ¿Cómo se llaman? ¿A qué banda de guerrilleros le están ayudando?

Espía: En San Francisco. Se llaman Zoila Rivas, María Teresa Argueta, María Jesus Sibrián, Nicolás Alfaro, Atilio Rivas, Ulises Sibrián, Juan Francisco Alfaro y Jesús Cepeda.

Soldado: Dame las direcciones donde viven.

Espía: Quiero seguridad, dinero y posición a cambio de esta información.

Soldado: Estas seguro de que la información esta correcta?

Espía: Si estoy seguro y éstas son las direcciones.

Soldado: Una vez que esté seguro de la información, te daré lo que me has pedido.

II ESCENA

(Veinte militares llegaron violentos y agresivos, golpeando las puertas con las culetas de los rifles y gritando...).

Militares: Abran las puertas, salgan, son unos guerrilleros.

Campesinos: Nosotros no somos guerrilleros. Somos unos campesinos. Somos inocentes de todo lo que nos acusan.

Familiares: No los maten, no se los lleven. Ellos son inocentes.
(gritaban llorando).

Militares: (Empujando a las familias).
Los tenemos que llevar por ordenes de arriba, porque éstos son guerrilleros.
(Los sacan a empujones de las casas y los interrogan).

Capitán: (Interrogandolos).
¿Quién es el cabecilla?
(golpeandolos, sacandoles las uñas)

Campesinos: Nosotros no sabemos nada. Compasión, misericordia.
(se desesperan y gritan).

(los militares los vendan, los ponen de espalda y los acribillan a quema ropa).

APPENDIX B

FINAL COPY OF THEATER SCRIPT

SPANISH AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

"LUCHA POR LA JUSTICIA"

GUION TEATRAL

DESARROLLADO POR LA CLASE DEL
NIVEL C

PROGRAMA DE EDUCACION POPULAR
DEL BARRIO

NUEVA YORK, 18 DE OCTUBRE, 1988

PRIMERA ESCENA

(En el cuartel militar de San Francisco se reunen el espia con el Capitan a cargo de la tropa).

Espia: En la provincia de Oriente hay ocho campesinos que dan informacion a los guerrilleros.

Soldado: Quienes son? Como se llaman? A que banda de guerrilleros le estan ayudando?

Espia: En San Francisco hay una banda de guerrilleros y los nombres son: Zoila Rivas, Maria Teresa Argueta, Maria Jesus Sibrian, Nicolas Alfaro, Atilio Rivas, Ulises Sibrian, Juan Francisco Alfaro y Jesus Cepeda.

Soldado: Dame las direcciones donde viven.

Espia: Quiero seguridad, dinero y posicion a cambio de esta informacion.

Soldado: Estas seguro de que la informacion esta correcta?

Espia: Si estoy seguro y estas son las direcciones.

Soldado: Una vez que este seguro de la informacion, te dare lo que me has pedido.

(Una vez termina de dar la informacion, el espia queda incomunicado).

SEGUNDA ESCENA

(Veinte militares llegaron a las casas de los campesinos, violentos y agresivos, golpeando las puertas con las culatas de los rifles y gritando...).

Militares: Abran las puertas, salgan, son unos guerrilleros.

Campesinos: Nosotros no somos guerrilleros. Somos unos campesinos. Somos inocentes de todo lo que nos acusan.

Familiares: No los maten, no se los lleven. Ellos son inocentes.
(gritaban llorando).

Militares: (Empujando a las familias).
Los tenemos que llevar por ordenes del Capitan, porque estos son guerrilleros.
(Los sacan a empujones de las casas y los interrogan).

Capitan: (Interrogandolos).
Quien es el cabecilla?
(golpeandolos, sacandoles las unas)

Campesinos: Nosotros no sabemos nada. Compasion, misericordia.
(se desesperan y gritan).

(los militares los vendan, los ponen de espalda y los acribillan a quema ropa).

TERCERA ESCENA

(Aparecen todos los participantes de la obra en el escenario).

Participante #1: Nuestra clase, despues de discutir lo anteriormente acontecido, llego a la conclusion de que este tipo de cosas suceden porque existe mucha desigualdad y por la falta de justicia social. Para poner fin a estas situaciones, hemos decidido de que hay que brindarles a los campesinos y a los ciudadanos en general la oportunidad y los medios para poder sobrevivir. Concretamente se necesita lo siguiente:

Participante #2: Tierra.

Participante #3: Maquinas para sembrar la tierra.

Participante #4: Semillas para sembrar.

Participante #5: Educacion basada en respeto.

Participante #6: Iglesia, religion.

Participante #7: Fuerza de voluntad, motivacion.

Participante #8: Salud y servicios medicos.

Participante #9: Respeto a la propiedad ajena.

Participante #10: Respeto a los derechos humanos.

(Sigue una discusion con el publico sobre estos puntos y otros que surgen en el dialogo).

ESCRITORES:

"STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE"

THEATRICAL SCRIPT

DEVELOPED BY THE LEVEL C CLASS

BARRIO POPULAR EDUCATION
PROGRAM

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 18TH, 1988

FIRST SCENE

(The spy is meeting with the Captain in charge of the troop in the military barracks in San Francisco).

Spy: In the western province there are eight peasants which give information to the guerrillas.

Soldier: Who are they? What are their names? Which of the guerrilla group are they helping?

Spy: In San Francisco there is only one guerrilla group and their names are: Zoila Rivas, Maria Teresa Argueta, Maria Jesus Sibrian, Nicolas Alfaro, Atilio Rivas, Ulises Sibrian, Juan Francisco Alfaro y Jesus Cepeda.

Soldier: Let me have the addresses of where they live.

Spy: I want security, money and position in exchange for this information.

Soldier: Are you sure that the information is correct?

Spy: Yes, I am sure and these are their addresses.

Soldier: Once I verify the information, I will give you what you have asked for.

(As soon as he finishes giving the soldier the information, the spy is placed in isolation).

SECOND SCENE

(Twenty soldiers have arrived at the houses of the peasants. They are violent and agressive, hitting the doors with the butts of the rifles and shouting...).

Soldiers: Open the doors, come out, you are guerrilla fighters.

Peasants: We are not guerrilla fighters, We are peasants. We are inocents of what you are accusing us.

Families: Don't kill them, dont't take them away. They are inocent (screaming and crying).

Soldier: (Pushing the families)
We have to take them away under orders from the Captain, because they are guerrilla fighters.
(Hitting the peasants, they push them out of their homes and begin to question them).

Captain: (Questioning)
Who is the leader?
(Hitting them, taking out their nails)

Peasants: We do not know anything. Have compassion, mercy.
(They are desperate and begin screaming)

(the soldiers cover their eyes, push them with their backs against the wall and they shoot them).

THIRD SCENE

(All the participants in the play appear on stage).

Participant #1: Our class, following a discussion of the incident which just took place, has reached the conclusion that this type of event occurs because of the existence of too much inequality and because of the lack of social justice. To end this type of situation, we have decided that peasants and all other citizens need to have the opportunity and the means to survive. Specifically, the following is what is needed:

Participant #2: Land

Participant #3: Machinery to work the land.

Participant #4: Seeds to plant the land.

Participant #5: Education based on respect.

Participant #6: Church and religion.

Participant #7: Will, motivation.

Participant #8: Health and medical services.

Participant #9: Respect for private property

Participant #10: Respect for human rights.

(A discussion follows with the audience about these points and others which are raised through the dialogue).

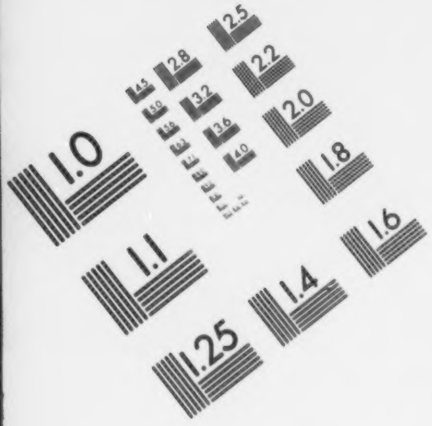
WRITERS

APPENDIX C

SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITINGS: QUESTION-ANSWER FORM

9/27/88

1) ¿Quines Murieron ?
Los Guerrilleros
2) ¿Quines los Mato ?
EL Ejercito salvadoreño
3 ¿ Como Lo Sabes ?
Lo discutimo Aqui en clase



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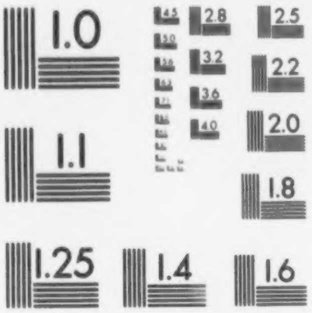
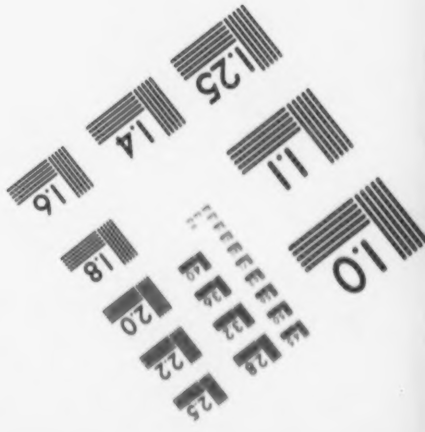




MANUFACTURED TO AIIM STANDARDS
BY APPLIED IMAGE, INC.

Germán Espinoza

① Quienes murieron?

Los diez campesino

② Quienes los Mato ?

El ejercito salvadoreño

③ Como lo sabes?

El obispo Los dijo

APPENDIX D

SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITINGS: ESSAY FORM

Illuminada [illegible]

En mí opinion los militares mataron los campesino porque ello tienen la fuerza mas poderosa a mi me parece que los campesino eran gerrillero y Esa gente no le convienen para tener orden ~~d~~ en el país Ello los matan por quieren acabar con los gerrillero

Lee la forma como entiendo este reportaje acerca de esta masacre ocurrida en el salvador es mi opinión que fuerón los soldados del ejercito o sean los militares. Ay muchas versiones de lo ocurrido pero todos los puntos y aclaraciones dán a entender qué fueron ellos. Devido a que ellos mismos se contradicen. Esto da a entender que la sivilización y el respecto por la vida humana esta dando marcha atras en muchas partes de este mundo.

Carmen Ayala

7/27/88

Para Mi Opinión fuerón los Militares. los Responsables de la Sangrienta Masacre. Pero ha Seguin Mi Conclución Nadie Se Quiere hazer Responsable, Por un acto tan desagradable Como Este. Pués Todo lo que yo he llegado ha Entender. Es que Aqui No hay nada Concreto. y asta los Mismo familiares Todos Están Confusos. y En Este Articulo Por Parte de la Prensa. y del mismo gobierno Es Para Confundir. ha toda la Opinión Publica.

Carlos Garcia.

APPENDIX E

STUDENT'S WRITING: TITLES FOR THE SCRIPT

10/14/85

"La Revolución"

Me parece que el titulo puede llamarse asi porque hay muchas gentes complicados.
implicados

También se puede llamar La Gerra porque están enbueltas los fuerzas Armados o sea el Ejército.

O También Gerra entre todos.

"Lucha Por el Poder.

Amenasados a Muerte por el Gobierno."

"Corrupción entre todos.
Diferencia entre todos

APPENDIX F

CLASSROOM READINGS

El ejército da una nueva version sobre la matanza en San Francisco

SAN SALVADOR – El Ejercito salvadoreño, cambiando su version original, aseguró el viernes que los siete hombres y tres mujeres que según sus familiares fueron asesinados por soldados, en realidad murieron cuando la tropa que los llevaba detenidos sufrió una emboscada de la guerrilla.

EL SALVADOR

Sin embargo, fuentes de organismos humanitarios afirmaron que los diez campesinos fueron sacados de sus casas el miércoles, en el caserío San Francisco del departamento oriental de San Vicente y posteriormente asesinados por miembros del batallón Jiboa, de la V Brigada de Infantería, acusados de pertenecer al Frente "Farabundo Martí" para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN).

Por su parte, Concepción Flores, el juez de la zona que reconoció los cadáveres, aseguró que Zoila Rivas, de 24 años, María Teresa Argüeta, de 55, María Jesus Sibrián, de 40, Jose María Flores, Nicolás Alfaro, Atilio Rivas, Ulises Sibrian, Juan Francisco Alfaro y Jesus Zepeda murieron el miércoles "en circunstancias confusas".

"No tenemos una versión exacta de los hechos. Lo que sí pudimos constatar es que los cadáveres mostraban impactos de granada. Nosotros no encontramos casquillos de balas, pero en las cámaras de television salieron", dijo el juez.

Los diez campesinos, segun el reconocimiento del juez, tenían la "masa encefálica destrozada".

Flores aseguró que los muertos eran civiles que hace aproximadamente un año, después de haber huido de esa zona de combates, regresaron al cantón San Francisco, jurisdicción del municipio de San Sebastian, "zona conflictiva donde esporádicamente se asienta el Ejército, una tierra de nadie donde actúan las dos fuerzas".

En un principio portavoces del Ejército informaron que los muertos eran guerrilleros y que habían perecido en un enfrentamiento militar, pero el viernes por la mañana, tras conocerse la versión de los familiares de las víctimas y de habitantes de San Francisco, aseguraron que "hubo un error operativo y mala interpretación".

■ *RESIDENTES DE SAN FRANCISCO colaboran con los familiares de los 10 ejecutados y acomodan sus cadáveres. Según dicen, los soldados tenían una lista en la que figuraba los nombres de los que fueron muertos con granadas de mano.* AP

El Diario. La Prensa, Domingo 25 de Septiembre de 1988

2/EL DIARIO-LA PRENSA, LUNES 26 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1988

Iglesia acusa ejército de matanzas

SAN SALVADOR – El obispo auxiliar de San Salvador, monseñor Gregorio Rosa Chávez, responsabilizó ayer a los soldados del ejército salvadoreño de una masacre en San Sebastián, San Vicente, unos 48 kilómetros al este de la capital.

Dijo que la Iglesia investigó y denunció este hecho "con sana intención, porque le duele toda muerte violenta, aunque otros esperan sacarle ventaja política a la tragedia", pero no explicó quienes.

Explicó en abono a sus declaraciones que "la oficina de tutela legal del Arzobispado realizó la investigación el mismo día en que se conoció la noticia, ya que acompañó al juez de paz de San Sebastián, a su secretario y al forense".

"De todo", agregó, "hay amplia documentación que podrá ser de gran ayuda para las autoridades que han expresado públicamente su decisión de conocer la verdad".

Rosa Chávez dijo que según estas pruebas y testimonios "los soldados son los que tienen la responsabilidad". El obispo dijo que no sólo hay que investigar y establecer la verdad, sino castigar a quienes resulten culpables, aunque vistan uniforme militar".

El obispo Rosa Chávez calificó de macabros los hechos ocurridos en el caserío y cantón "La Cebadilla" de San Vicente, donde diez campesinos fueron asesinados el miércoles 21 del corriente, de lo cual se acusa a soldados del batallón "Jiboa" de la Quinta Brigada.

El comité de prensa de la Fuerza armada dijo que tales campesinos eran terroristas muertos en un enfrentamiento y dos días después el jefe del Estado Mayor Conjunto Adolfo Blandón cambió la versión asegurando que según los informes, los soldados llevaban en vías de investigación a 8 campesinos cuando fueron emboscados por guerrilleros, muriendo en la acción los 8 reos más dos extremistas.

El obispo dijo ayer que "ojalá se aclare esto, porque en El Salvador la situación se torna más grave y no sólo hay que juzgarla por la masacre de San Vicente, sino porque cada día la vida vale menos en este país".

Y continuó diciendo: "en los últimos días las cifras se han abultado en lo que respecta a muertos, debido a ataques y contrataques que constituyen parte de la rutina de la guerra".

El obispo no aclaró, pero su observación fue una clara alusión a combates en el nororiente del país, donde murieron por lo menos 16 soldados y 11 guerrilleros, según informe oficial. En el fin de semana otros 11 soldados fueron muertos en una emboscada.

EL MUNDO Sept. 30, 1988

Involucran al Ejército en Matanza de Campesinos Salvadoreños

Por Raúl Beltrhan
Agencia UPI

SAN SALVADOR — La Oficina de Tutela Legal de la Iglesia Católica reiteró ayer que soldados del ejército salvadoreño participaron en la matanza de 10 campesinos la semana pasada por presunta colaboración con los guerrilleros.

"Uno de los que aparentemente venía al mando de las tropas les dijo a los capturados que 'ustedes son tontos, están así por colaborar con la guerrilla'", señaló el informe de Tutela Legal sobre la investigación de la matanza en el departamento de San Vicente.

Una copia del informe fue entregada a United Press International.

"Con todo respeto le digo al Señor Presidente que si él solicita el informe sobre estas 10 muertes se lo enviaremos con gusto, pero también le pido que escuche otras fuentes y no sólo se concrete a escuchar la versión militar", dijo María Julia Hernández, directora del organismo humanitario.

El presidente José Napoleón Duarte pidió antenoche a la Iglesia que de "tener las pruebas" sobre la presunta culpabilidad de efectivos militares "es su deber entregarlas", para "deducir las responsabilidades en este caso".

Hernández precisó que el 20 de septiembre, en horas de la tarde, "tropas del ejército nacional pertenecientes al batallón Jiboa de la Quinta Brigada de Infantería llegaron a la jurisdicción de San Sebastián; capturaron a varias personas que fueron llevadas a una antigua casa escuela del caserío".

Segun el informe, los efectivos militares "capturaron aproximadamente a 40 personas, todos residentes del cantón San Francisco, en cuyos alrededores había unos 70 soldados dispersos por toda la zona".

Los testimonios y fotografías recabados mostraron que "a las 10 víctimas les fueron vendados los ojos y amarradas frente a testigos del lugar. Al poco tiempo se escuchó un tiroteo y tres explosiones que no tuvieron respuesta".

"Los testigos vieron cómo regresaban los soldados de donde se habían llevado a los campesinos", agregó el informe.

Tutela Legal citó el reconocimiento de los jueces de la zona, que avalan la versión de que no hubo una emboscada con minas y que, por el contrario, la mayoría de las víctimas tenían disparos en el cráneo y el tórax.

El juez, la comisión no gubernamental de Derechos Humanos y Tutela Legal coinciden en que "en el lugar del crimen no hay evidencias del uso de minas ni de emboscada".

El Mundo, 30 de Septiembre de 1988

Creo que, para su evasión, aprovechó una migración de pájaros silvestres. La mañana de la partida puso bien en orden su planeta. Deshollinó cuidadosamente los volcanes en actividad. Poseía dos volcanes en actividad. Era muy cómodo para calentar el desayuno de la mañana. Poseía también un volcán extinguido. Pero, como decía el principito, «¡no se sabe nunca!» Deshollinó, pues, igualmente el volcán extinguido. Si se deshollinan bien los volcanes, arden suave y regularmente, sin erupciones. Las erupciones volcánicas son como el fuego de las chimeneas. Evidentemente, en nuestra tierra, somos demasiado pequeños para deshollinar nuestros volcanes. Por eso nos causan tantos disgustos.

El principito arrancó también, con un poco de melancolía, los últimos brotes de baobabs. Creía que no iba a volver jamás. Pero todos estos trabajos cotidianos le parecieron extremadamente agradables esa mañana. Y cuando regó por última vez la flor, y se dispuso a ponerla al abrigo de su globo, descubrió que tenía deseos de llorar.

—Adiós —dijo a la flor.

Pero la flor no le contestó.

—Adiós —repitió.

La flor tosió. Pero no por el resfriado.

—He sido tonta —le dijo por fin—. Te pido perdón. Procura ser feliz.

Quedó sorprendido por la ausencia de reproches. Permaneció allí, desconcertado, con el globo en la mano. No comprendía esa calma mansedumbre.

—Pero, sí, te quiero —le dijo la flor—. No has sabido nada, por mi culpa. No tiene importancia. Pero has sido tan tonto como yo. Procura ser feliz... Deja el globo en paz. No lo quiero más.

—Pero el viento...

—No estoy tan resfriada como para... El aire fresco de la noche me hará bien. Soy una flor.

—Pero los animales...

—Es preciso que soporte dos o tres orugas si quiero conocer a las mariposas. ¡Parece que es tan hermoso! Si no, ¿quién habrá de visitarme? Tú estarás lejos. En cuanto a los animales grandes, no les temo. Tengo mis garras.

De Saint Exupery, El Principito, (Spain: Alianza Editorial, 1971), pp. 42-44

2

LES VOY A GRITAR

(Continuación)

Debe utilizarse todo el escenario. Se construye un parapeto que representa un edificio de varios pisos. Arriba se coloca una plataforma. Al final de la grada una pequeña luz debe caer con fuerza. No aparece nada más en escena. Se oyen ruidos, pasos de muchas personas, gritos militares y aparece el guachimán corriendo, llevando un reloj en las manos. Sube precipitadamente las escaleras y llega hasta la plataforma. Se tiende en el suelo y desde allí comienza a asomarse. Suben también los gritos y los estruendos. Se oyen estallidos de varias bombas y el humo asciende por el escenario. (Si el recinto es cerrado puede usarse también pirita de hierro en ácido sulfúrico para que el mal olor cunda y la sensación de gases lacrimógenos se riegue). El vigilante sigue asomado. De pronto se oye un gran estallido. Caen vidrios rotos, gritos y órdenes militares se pierden en la lejanía y se acercan por momentos. El guachimán levanta la cabeza lentamente en su parapeto, las luces crecen sobre él.

(haciendo como si levantara un teléfono y marcara...).

Vigilante: ¿casa del doctor Ollano?

(con voz rotunda, usando parlante que llene todo el escenario y el recinto, se oye la respueta).

—SI, CON EL HABLA.

Vigilante: doctor, habla Pedro Domínguez, el vigilante de turno de las ocho, acaban de...

(su voz se pierde porque en ese momento estallan nuevas bombas, sube el humero y se oyen más gritos).

—SI SEÑOR, YA SABIA, NO SE PREOCUPE.

Vigilante: pero doctor, están tumbando la rectoría, están quemando una cosa hedionda y quebrando los vidrios de los ventanales.

—YA LE DIJE, PEDRO, NO SE PREOCUPE, YO SE TODO.

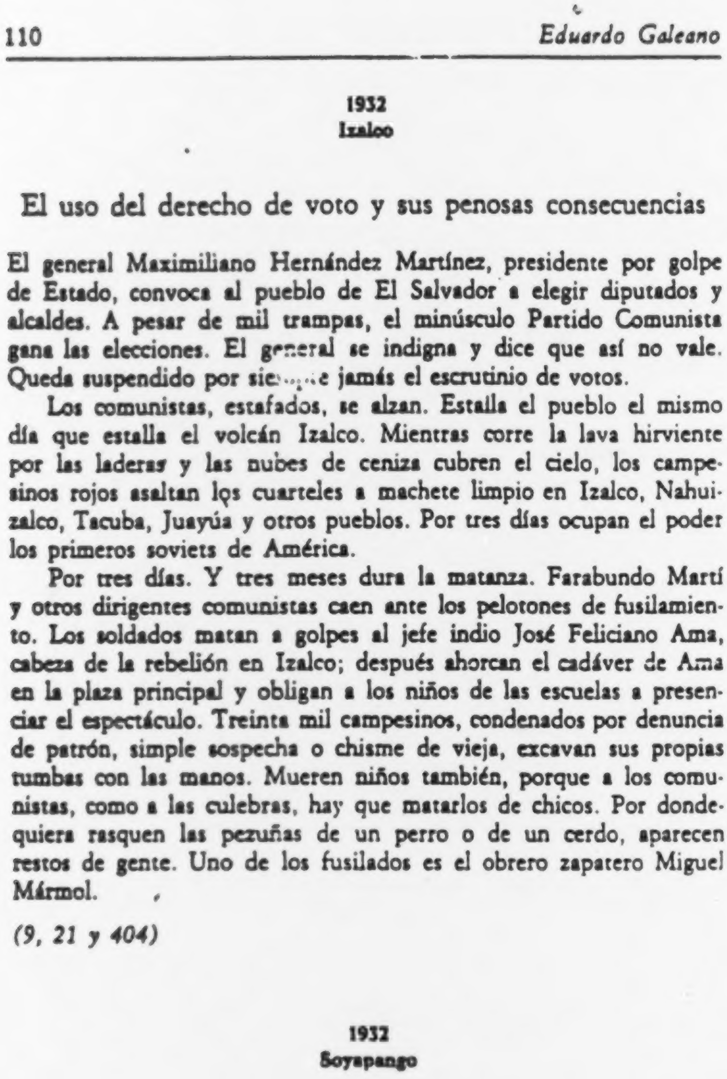
Vigilante: bueno, doctor, ¿pero cómo hago para salir de aquí?

—PRESENTESE AL CORONEL RAMIREZ, ESTA ENCARGADO DE LA ACCION.

Vigilante: bueno, doctor...

(En este momento se oyen nuevos vidrios, más gritos, más humo, más mal olor y la luz que alumbraba la plataforma se apaga).

Gustavo Alvarez Gardeazabal, *El Titiritero*, (Plaza V. Jones: Editores Colombia Ltda., 1979), pp. 157-158.



1932
Izalco

El uso del derecho de voto y sus penosas consecuencias

El general Maximiliano Hernández Martínez, presidente por golpe de Estado, convoca al pueblo de El Salvador a elegir diputados y alcaldes. A pesar de mil trampas, el minúsculo Partido Comunista gana las elecciones. El general se indigna y dice que así no vale. Queda suspendido por siempre jamás el escrutinio de votos.

Los comunistas, estafados, se alzan. Estalla el pueblo el mismo día que estalla el volcán Izalco. Mientras corre la lava hirviente por las laderas y las nubes de ceniza cubren el cielo, los campesinos rojos asaltan los cuarteles a machete limpio en Izalco, Nahuizalco, Tacuba, Juayúa y otros pueblos. Por tres días ocupan el poder los primeros soviets de América.

Por tres días. Y tres meses dura la matanza. Farabundo Martí y otros dirigentes comunistas caen ante los pelotones de fusilamiento. Los soldados matan a golpes al jefe indio José Feliciano Ama, cabeza de la rebelión en Izalco; después ahorcan el cadáver de Ama en la plaza principal y obligan a los niños de las escuelas a presenciar el espectáculo. Treinta mil campesinos, condenados por denuncia de patrón, simple sospecha o chisme de vieja, excavan sus propias tumbas con las manos. Mueren niños también, porque a los comunistas, como a las culebras, hay que matarlos de chicos. Por dondequiera rasquen las pezuñas de un perro o de un cerdo, aparecen restos de gente. Uno de los fusilados es el obrero zapatero Miguel Mármol.

(9, 21 y 404)

1932
Soyapango

Miguel a los veintiséis

Los llevan en camión, amarrados. Miguel reconoce los lugares de su infancia:

Eduardo Galeano, Memorias del Fuego III. El Siglo del Viento, (Spain: Siglo Veintiuno, 1987), p 110.